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CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF THE IBOS IN LONDON.

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ABSTRACT.

This thesis is the study of the social organisation of an ethnic minority - the Ibos of South Eastern Nigeria - in London. It examines the interaction of major variables in three historical periods, beginning with the early years of Ibo migration and culminating in the period following the Nigeria-Biafra War of 1967-1970. Attention is focussed on the interrelationship of power relations and symbolic action. Activities associated with kinship and marriage are revealed as the forces which sustain the group in changing structural circumstances.

In the years preceeding the war, the Ibos are a community of students. Financial dependence on kin, and the expectation of a speedy return home, promote conformity to traditional norms of marriage. The following period sees a radical change in social organisation. With the termination of financial support the Ibos become a community of workers, their studies suspended or abandoned. In the face of external pressure relationships within the group are intensified and internal social barriers lowered. A kinship ideology is used to mobilise support for the war effort. The emphasis on unity is reflected in patterns of marriage.

In the contemporary period external pressures are absent and individual energies are spent in the promotion of private interests. But an awareness of common interests is apparent in the sphere of kinship and marriage. The senior members of the group strive to ensure that certain standards are upheld in the process of marital selection and legalisation, the conduct of marital affairs and the settlement of disputes.

Thus it is seen that the Ibos remain culturally distinct despite economic incorporation in the host society. It is argued, in conclusion, that the study of continuity and change in a particular ethnic group has implications for the perpetuation of minority groups in general.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

Background to the research. The original aim of the research which is described in the following chapters was to examine the social organisation of the Ibos in London, in order to see how an ethnic group perpetuates itself in an alien environment. In common with other minority groups, the Ibo situation prompts questions about social boundaries and group affiliation. Other studies have drawn attention to social problems arising from inter-ethnic contact in fast-growing cities in newly independent countries; to the persistence and reinforcement of ethnic ties in the movement to urban areas from the rural hinterland, or in the establishment of trading communities outside their areas of origin.[1] Consideration has been given to the relationship between ethnic identity and class affiliation in societies characterised by both ethnic diversity and stratification on the basis of socio-economic criteria.[2]

In the initial stages of the research all of these aspects - the nature of ethnic identity, the importance attached to ethnic and class symbols, the maintenance of social boundaries - seemed relevant to the situation of the Ibos in London. In their case, additional factors associated with both the group and the social environment helped to create a unique situation and so commend it for study.

Information gleaned from a variety of sources suggested that a study of the Ibos in London might be particularly interesting and academically rewarding. In the first place, relatively little attention has been given to contemporary Ibo society in Nigeria, a fact which in itself makes such an attempt worthwhile.[3] Even less is known about Ibo communities living 'abroad' (ie. away from the village). Sociological accounts of Ibos living in ethnically diverse areas (Ibadan, Calabar and Port Harcourt) exist[4] but nothing at all is known about

1. See for example I. Wallerstein (1965); D.Parkin (1966); H. Kuper ed.(1965); A. Cohen (1966) & (1967); J.C. Mitchell (1956); A.L. Epstein (1958) & (1967); M. Banton (1967); P.C. Lloyd (1967); K. Little (1965); M. Gluckman (1965).
2. Examples are P.C. Lloyd ed. (1966); P. Morris (1961); A.U. Southall ed.(1961) & (1966); M. Fraenkel (1964).
3. On the present state of Ibo studies see S. Uttenberg (1961).
4. W.T. Morrill (1963); C. Ukonjo (1967); A. Smock (1971).

Ibo communities in Western industrial societies. Significant differences in the society of the Ibos in Nigeria and the social life of the Western capital - London - to which they have travelled are revealed in the existing ethnographic literature on the Ibos, and the various studies of new elites, urbanisation and changing patterns of social stratification in sub-saharan Africa. Various striking contrasts, together with the new social, political and economic circumstances induced by the Nigeria - Biafra War, suggest certain problem areas for analysis. These may be listed briefly.

According to literature, Ibo society is traditionally classless. An egalitarian ideology is marked by the absence of institutionalised privilege. Authority in traditional Ibo culture is not vested in formal hereditary offices. Positions of power and influence are achieved largely by material means.[1] This situation provides a marked contrast to that of contemporary Britain where the converse obtains; social relationships are largely governed by class categories and reflect a hierarchial model of society. Nigerian society also provides a contrast to traditional Ibo society and thereby adds a further dimension to the social structure of the Ibo community in London. In contemporary Nigeria, according to the literature, urban society is increasingly characterised by a system of stratification resembling the class structure of industrialised societies.[2]

Ibos are said to be individualistic yet at the same time 'clannish'. The impression gained from the literature is that communal ties are strong, and based on kinship and locality. Individual achievement and collective interest are equally valued, an apparent contradiction which perhaps has its equivalent in the individualism and class interests of Western societies. In the latter, however, the ideology of individualism operates in most spheres of activity, and little significance is attached to kinship and locality as organising principles.

Again, various questions are prompted by the contrasts associated with the dichotomies of industrial-non-industrial society and urban-rural forms

1. Standard Ibo ethnographies are C.K. Meek (1937); M.M. Green (1964); S.L.Ross (1965); V. Uchendu (1965); articles by G.I. Jones.

2. P.C. Lloyd (1966),(1967),(1971).

of social organisation. In terms of Talcott Parson's pattern variables, relations in Britain are typically specific and action is governed by universalistic criteria. In Nigeria the opposite values - diffuseness and particularism - obtain.[1] The characteristics of the urban way of life - density, anonymity, heterogeneity and so on - are more pervasive in Britain than in Nigeria, where city life, in the sense in which it is understood in the West, is modified by indigenous forms of social organisation which defy the attempts of Western sociologists to develop a universally applicable model of urbanism.

An element in the situation of the Ibos in London which calls for particular attention is colour prejudice, and the issues related to it. The question arises as to whether this particular minority group has the identity of 'Immigrant' ascribed to it and is subjected to the various kinds of discriminatory treatment accordingly. The status of commonwealth citizens, the developments in legislation designed to control immigration and the prevailing social attitudes on the matter are factors in the situation which deserve attention. Apart from the receptivity or lack of it in the host society, the attitudes of the Ibos is a relevant consideration: their motives in coming, and their expectations of life in the Christian fellow-commonwealth country whose norms they have already been encouraged to accept as their own.

In this respect, the phrase 'Ibo receptivity to change' stands out in the literature indicating a fruitful area for investigation.[2] One wonders how the individual adaptability and institutional flexibility made much of by anthropologists is manifested in this particular inter-ethnic situation.

Finally, the factor of the Nigeria-Biafra war adds a unique dimension to a situation which is otherwise not unusual. The war ended in January 1970, fourteen months before the fieldwork for this thesis began. In approaching the problem, it seemed essential to take account of the War in examining the way of life of the Ibos in London. They were living in the country whose diplomatic influence and physical resources had been deployed against their

1. T. Parsons (1951).
2. S. Uttenberg (1959).

people at home and whose government had openly declared its support for the status quo in Nigeria, a status quo which the Ibos regarded as highly inimical to their interests. This situation would inevitably affect the degree of social interaction within the community. One wanted to see whether and by what means the Ibos had organised themselves to promote the war effort; whether they had made use of existing institutional mechanisms or developed new ones appropriate to the new situation; and whether the appeal for support had been made in terms of kinship, religion, locality or some other category.

At the time fieldwork commenced it seemed appropriate to ask whether the intensity of interaction observed during the war years[1] continued to exist; whether social barriers lowered during that time had disappeared for good, or reappeared in the post-war social and economic conditions. A related question was whether the channels of communication forged during the war still existed or whether there had been a reversal to the pre-war patterns of association. In particular, it seemed likely that the war had dramatically affected the future of the Ibos in London, and that the period of the research would be crucial, a turning point in the history of the community. Indeed, one could imagine that a high-water mark had just been reached, following which the community would dwindle away to nothing as Ibos already here graudally finished their studies and left, and none came to replace them. Alternatively, it was possible that one was witnessing the establishment of first generation Ibo immigrants, forced to remain in Britain by the conditions in their home country.

In short, the decision to undertake research on the Ibos in London was prompted by several considerations; the present state of Ibo studies; theoretical issues of ethnicity and problems of inter-ethnic contact; and the peculiar situation of the Ibos in London in the aftermath of the Nigeria-Biafra War. Broadly defined, the aim was to examine the social organisation

1. The official fieldwork period was preceded by several years of close and continuous contact with a section of the Ibo community in London.

of an ethnic minority in an alien society. More specifically the question for consideration was this: in the context of a Western Industrial society and the change in structural circumstances induced by the war in Nigeria, what is the extent of adherence to Ibo norms and the extent of adaptation to the norms of English society? Attention was to be focused on three sets of relationships: those between Ibos and members of the host society; between Ibos in London and those in Nigeria; and among the Ibos themselves.

At the commencement of fieldwork with these areas of interest in mind, the immediate problem was methodological. The theoretical problem had to be defined operationally and rendered susceptible to empirical analysis. The problem was two-fold. Abstract sociological constructs such as 'community' must be operationalised in terms of specific areas of social interaction. And conceptual clarification was required so that the group, loosely termed an 'ethnic minority' could be delineated for the purpose of study. The first question for consideration, then, concerns the identity of the group. The next relates to the method of studying them.

Delineation of the group. Two broad perspectives are discernible in the various approaches to the study of ethnic minorities.[1] According to one, an ethnic group is a group of ascription and identification. Action and relationships are structured by a set of values and material circumstances. Ascription and identification depend on primordial sentiments which spring from the givens of social existence - assumed blood ties, race, language, religion, regionalism, customs - which produce an 'unreflective sense of collective self-hood'[2] The term 'ethnicity' in this view refers to inherited ascribed characteristics originally perceived in studies of immigrants, and that definition remains central. The postulates of descent and socio-cultural community differentiate ethnicity from other forms of differentiation, such as social stratification. Ethnic ties are morally binding and non-specific but are not always operative.

1. This was the conclusion of the A.S.A. Conference on Urban Ethnicity, held in London in Spring 1970.
2. The expression is C. Geertz's. (1963).

Thus an ethnic group is often not a group in the sense of an interacting social unit but a category, a collectivity of individuals who have only their ethnic identity in common. In certain circumstances appeals can be made to it by a few individuals to whom it is strategic, and the rest are obliged to follow by virtue of the moral imperative of ethnic ties. Within this framework questions are posed concerning the situations in which ethnic symbols become meaningful, the behaviour of individuals when there is a conflict between the ethnic ideology and, say, the status ideology of the wider society, and the organisation of the group when its members perceive a threat to their collective interests. Ethnicity is accounted for at the level of individual perception; The emphasis is on subjective affiliation or ascription by other people. Attention is focussed on symbols of identity, external signs and diacritica which differentiate between members and outsiders.

According to the other view, an ethnic group is a collectivity with common norms reflected in a distinctive pattern of symbolic behaviour. Ethnicity is the process of interaction between two such culture groups. Contact between them is of an economic and political kind, by virtue of which the groups have relations of interest and may be defined as interest groups. 'Ethnicity' refers to the way in which the respective interests are articulated by means of symbolic action - kinship, friendship, ritual and ceremonial. As relations of power change, so does the pattern of articulation; the degree of formal organisation; and conformity to group norms.

In the view of the 'Interest' school of thought ethnicity is not an irreducible category but a dependent variable. The phenomenon known as an ethnic group is a special kind of interest group, differentiated from others - eg. classes - by the particular symbolic structure used to articulate its interests. Within this framework attention is focussed on the articulation of interests in changing structural circumstances. This view gives conceptual priority to the boundary situation, and to structural relationships. It takes account

of external constraints excercised on one group by another.

The two schools of thought - the interest school and the cognitive school - are thus distinguishable by their level of abstraction. The cognitive school operates with a common sense definition on the assumption that ethnicity is an irreducible concept so that conceptual emphasis is rightly placed on the factual perceptions of individuals. It is concerned with the individual manipulation of ethnic symbols for political, recreational and kinship purposes. Ethnic identity provides a basis for cooperation, a source of categories for action and association. At the methodological level the cognitive approach takes the individual use of ethnic symbols as a starting point.

The interest school adopts a holistic approach. 'Ethnic group' is a sociological construct, a model produced by the ethnographer on the basis of cultural uniformity (of religion, occupation etc.). In methodological terms it concentrates upon the strength of group boundaries, and asks how these are sustained in changing circumstances.

A criticism made of the interest school is that its level of abstraction precludes individual perceptions. At the level of action subjective affiliation and ascription by others are relevant considerations which are obscured by the ethnographer's model, a sociological construct based on objective criteria and imposed on the actors. The cognitive school is criticised for its failure to explain the basis of identification. Its opponents see the cognitive aspect - the presence or absence of subjective identification - as arising from, or incidental to, the process of interaction. The degree of interaction depends on structural circumstances - the political, economic and legal status of the group in the wider society. A high degree of interaction, induced by these factors, promotes identification and leads to the reinforcement, or creation, of symbols of identity. In the view of the interest school the cognitive school is of greater psychological than sociological interest, since common membership of a social category may or may not have implications for action.

An explanation in terms of individual perception fails to take account of external constraints and is hence inadequate for understanding a sociological phenomenon.

The views are complementary, and both are illuminating for the Ibo case. Both are accommodated in the concept of ethnic group and ethnicity adopted for the present purpose. The concept used here differs from that of the interest school to the extent that ethnicity is not regarded simply as a dependant variable or the ethnic group a special type of interest group. An ethnic group is seen as belonging to a different category from that of a social class by virtue of its methods of recruitment. On the other hand ethnicity is taken to mean more than a process of individual identification and ascription. Structural circumstances determine the strength of ethnic ties, the potency of ethnic symbols and the pattern of identification and ascription.

There are in fact two dimensions of social reality which must be taken into account in a polyethnic or plural situation of this kind: the way people feel and the way they behave. The way they feel - the psychological dimension - is a matter of identity. Identification with the rest of the group may be achieved through subjective affiliation or ascription by other people. Common identity rests on unifying symbols such as language, history and culture, and on objective circumstances which draw people together such as economic interest and minority group status.

The second dimension, patterns of interaction, is in one sense a manifestation of the first. A high degree of interaction is the empirical expression of a felt community of interest. Conversely, a low degree of interaction is an indication of social distance and marks the boundary between the group and the rest of society, or between one minority group and another. At the same time interaction deserves conceptual priority over identity in a sociological analysis in as much as individuals are brought into interaction by force of circumstance and then develop a common identity. It is born of their common interests and reflected in external signs, shared values and symbolic behaviour.

In the chapters which follow, emphasis is placed on patterns of interaction rather than systems of identification. The Ibos are studied as a community of interacting individuals rather than a social aggregate whose members have only their identity in common. However, the two dimensions are substantively related as the following description of identification and interaction in the Ibo community makes clear.

a. Identity. The following comments reveal some of the ways in which the Ibos perceive their society and their membership of it.

'The Igbos[1] are a community to the extent that they have a common language, though they speak a variety of different dialects. A man feels a special affinity with someone who speaks Igbo. It is language which makes an Igbo-man. An Igbo who can't speak the language properly has forfeited his birthright...'

'Some of us want to have a school for our children born in Britain in order to keep the culture alive. But it's difficult to think of a rallying factor. Uther ethnic groups have religion, language or art forms but the Ibos are united only by descent.' (A dilemma because the principle of descent divides as well as unites. It lies at the root of parochialism and tribalism, archaic tendencies which are out of place in the new order.')

'Ibos are competitive and always aim high. If an Iboman has a shilling he wants to add another to it, unlike a Yoruba who eats today and forgets tomorrow. Ibos work harder than other Nigerians, consume less, save more. Iboland is large but it has a common culture: the spirit of hard work.'

These self-images reflect the importance of language, descent and values, though there is no consensus of view. Uthers stress shared circumstances of life in Britain:

'It is difficult here. In Britain we are all the same, all "boy-Boys" together.'

'London is a leveller. Here you are criticised by people who wouldn't dare to stand before you at home. But we are all studying now, all doing the same thing. You have to mix with people you wouldn't look at at home.'[2]

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1. Vernacular spelling, not generally used but insisted on by this informant.
2. The point was made rather embarrasingly at a wedding reception by the Master of Ceremonies. The bride's parents, a chief and his wife, had come for the occasion and had to be invited to take their place on the platform. The M.C.'s first faux pas was to introduce the Chief as'Mr....' When his error was hurriedly pointed out to him he added insult to injury by explaining that he had forgotten because 'here (in U.K.) we don't bother about such things.'

'Being so far from home draws us together. Even Osus...(descendants of ritual slaves, contact with whom is proscribed). After all, a journey of 3,000 miles must have changed them a bit, made them "less bad".' (spoken with irony).

Different aspects of the common identity are stressed in these comments. Linguistic affinity, common territory, and common descent are reinforced by the circumstances which have brought the people to Britain and the common problems they face here.

In London a sense of affinity exists between Ibo speakers, though few would use language to define membership of the group as did the informant quoted earlier. Many people, indeed, speak it imperfectly or not at all, especially if they have grown up outside Iboland. Igbo-speakers who are not Ibo by descent, such as Yoruba students whose parents were traders in the East,[1] are treated with familiarity and a lack of the reserve normally present in relations with non-Ibos, but they are not accepted as full members of the group.

Common descent provides the ultimate criterion of group membership. It provides the idiom for the expression of community sentiments. Remote ties become significant and new relationships are discovered.[2] A young woman who described how she spent her offduties (she was a nurse) with her 'brother' and his wife said that she had not met him until she came to England, or even known of the relationship. She said with some wonder that she had worked with his brother in the same bank at home without even knowing that he was her relation! The relationship was too distant to be recognised in their home area, but in London it assumed significance. The importance of descent is shown also in the following example. A young man explained his position in the war as follows: 'I supported Biafra not for intellectual reasons but because I am an Ibo. I have never been to Eastern Nigeria and I don't speak the language. But when my

1. See J.A. Sofola, (1971).
2. This practice is founded on tradition. On the manipulation of descent reckoning for the structural realignment of descent groups see M.M. Green, (1964) and G.I. Jones (1949).

family were cut off from Nigeria it had to be the same for me. I am Ibo because my kith and kin are Ibo...' A Western Ibo described with some bitterness how he had been forced to identify with Biafra. He said, 'I don't sympathise with them (the Eastern Ibos). We (Western Ibos) are more Bini (culturally related to Benin). But when the fighting started the other people in the Mid-West State said they didn't want us any more and we should go and join the rest of our people across the Niger.' Rather than do that, he came to Britain and now associates with one or two other Western Ibos.

Apart from common descent and socio-cultural and linguistic affinity, there are factors in the environment in London which contribute to the sense of common identity. Ibos are united by the experience of travelling many miles with the same objective, and trying to achieve it in difficult circumstances. When legal, social and political factors in the environment stand between them and the attainment of their goal, a sense of common identity based on a community of interest reduces the internal barriers which would have divided them in the home environment.[1]

These factors include legislation designed to control immigration, and the attitudes of hostility in the host society which gave birth to it (and to subsequent legislation to improve race relations). Difficulty experienced universally in the search for accomodation and jobs fosters a sense of unity among people who otherwise have little in common except descent. The war, in particular, underlined their common identity and called for conscious affiliation with the group.

b. Interaction. A sense of common identity based on descent, socio-cultural affinity and a community of interest is reflected in and promoted by patterns of interaction. In describing the nature and extent of interaction in the population we are concerned with social categories, the structure of relationships and the boundaries which delineate the group in the wider society.

1. These cleavages will be discussed later in another context.

The subject of study, it has been stated, is the pattern of interaction within a social unit identified as the Ibo community. The use of the term 'community' in respect of the Ibos in London raises conceptual and methodological problems which should be clarified from the start. The first is concerned with social boundaries.

A community may broadly be defined as 'an area of social living marked by some degree of social coherence.'[1] It is characterised by an identity of interest and intensity of interaction among its members. These two aspects are substantively related. A high degree of interaction is the empirical expression of a community of interest, and is generally, though not always, associated with the subjective identification of individuals with the group. A low degree of interaction is an indication of social distance and marks the boundary between the community and the rest of society or between one community and another. Thus 'community'implies a degree of boundedness. It suggests an identifiable unit whose members associate among themselves to the exclusion, partial or total, of non-members.

A community, then, is marked by the interdependency of relationships and activities of the people who belong to it. In an urban situation, however, most of the members of a community, while interacting among themselves, are at the same time involved in relationships and activities with outsiders. They participate in the plurality of social fields - industrial, political, religious and so on - which make up the social system of the town.[2] The absence of clear cut boundaries poses a problem for analysis. For the purpose of study, boundaries must be drawn around the continuum of relationships which comprise the community. To the extent that events and relationships

1. McIver and Page, quoted by R. Frankenberg(1966 a) p. 15. He elaborates on their definition as follows:'Community implies having something in common. Those who live in a community have overriding economic interests which are the same or complementary. They work together and also play together. Their interest in things gives them a common interest in each other. They quarrel with each other but are never indifferent to each other. They form a group of people who meet frequently face to face although this may mean that they end up back to back...' p. 238.

2. J. Clyde Mitchell renders Barnes's concept of social field as follows: 'A social field may be thought of as a series of inter-connecting relationships all of which in some way influence each other...Each field is a segment of the social system which may be isolated in terms of the interdependency of

(Cont'd p.13)

external to the immediate situation affect the behaviour of the actors, the notion of 'community' is an abstraction and boundaries which are defined to meet the needs of a particular study are arbitrary. But such boundaries are necessary for heuristic reasons. for without delimiting the area of social relations which are to be the subject of intensive study the enquiry is likely to become overextended, as the various chains of relationships are traced further and further afield. This is a requirement for the study of every community in an urban environment, but in the case of an ethnic minority the need for clearly defined boundaries is particularly pressing. As A.Cohen notes of the Hausa in Ibadan, members of a community of migrants maintain vigorous links over considerable distances.[1]

In defining the unit of analysis in the present case it seems reasonable to include, where necessary, actors spatially removed from the Ibo community who belong to the same role set as an individual, or individuals, in London. Thus in the extended case presented later in the chapter the attitudes and actions of an Ibo in Nigeria are taken into account in understanding the behaviour of his brother in London. The man in Nigeria, although spatially removed from the situation under study, is an important member of his brother's role set. He is the first link in a chain of relationships which extend outwards from the community. Similarly, some non-Ibos who by direct links of work, friendship or marriage belong to the social networks of particular Ibos are included in the analysis. But the relationships are traced no further than the first link.[2] The unit of analysis thereby remains centred upon interacting Ibos.

Associated with the question of boundaries is another problem of equal relevance for the present discussion. It arises in connection with the internal arrangement of groups in an urban situation. The existence of interests outside the community affects the nature and intensity of relationships within it.

(2 cont'd. from page 12) the relationships and the activities of the people involved in it.....Overlapping fields together.....comprise the total social system.....' (1966) p. 57.

1. A. Cohen (1969 a) p. 25.

2. A. Cohen follows a similar procedure in his study of the Hausa, by including in the analysis relationships which lead outside the quarter, but tracing them no further than the first link. The relationship of a Sabo landlord to a cattle dealer in Hausaland is included but the social network of the latter is not (1969 a) p. 25.

Whether defined on the basis of neighbourhood, class, ethnic origin, religious affiliation or other criterion, a community in an urban situation tends to be marked by internal groupings which partly reflect the institutions of the wider society. The members of an ethnic minority, for instance, may interact by virtue of their common interests in relation to non-members but at the same time associate among themselves on the basis of variables like occupation, place of residence, wealth, political interests or religious affiliation; or external criteria of a different nature such as home town in the country of origin. The basis of association is flexible since the different sets of relationships, or social fields, overlap. An individual is sometimes in the position of having to choose which of several roles he will play vis-a-vis another person. He may relate to him as a kinsman in one situation, a political rival in another, and a landlord to his tenant in a third.[1]

The pattern of interaction among the Ibos reflects this variety of groupings. Indeed, defined in terms of interaction it is perhaps misleading to talk about 'the Ibo community' as if its members form a single, cohesive unit. They did so for the duration of the Nigeria-Biafra war but now are more accurately seen as a series of interlocking and overlapping units based on place of origin, place of upbringing or education; on occupation and socio-economic status; and on residence.[2] But whether they are or are not a 'community' in subjective terms is in a sense irrelevant. Objectively they are a unit by virtue of the marked tendency for role-playing with other Ibos. The interdependency of actions and relationships among the members of the group distinguishes it as a unit within the wider social system of the city. As such the Ibos are a suitable unit for analysis, a unit to which the label

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1. The phenomenon originally defined by Evans-Prichard as Situational Selection. For a discussion of its contemporary significance see J. Clyde Mitchell (1966) p 58-9

2. There is a resemblance here between the London Ibos and the Western Ibos in Ibadan. R. Hannertz was struck by the fact that the various groups have only their Ibo identity in common. They are spread our over various occupations; they have fewer multiplex relationships than do other ethnic groups. They are therefore a category rather than a group (community). However, Hannertz believed that appeals could be made on the basis of the common Ibo identity and people would feel morally obliged to respond. This view was expressed at the A.S.A. Conference on Urban Ethnicity, London 1971.

'community'is attached largely for convenience. If the central sociological problem is seen as being the pattern of interaction within a heuristically bounded unit, the ontological status of the Ibos as a 'community' in the accepted sense of the word[1] is irrelevant. Nonetheless it is a convenient expression which is adopted in preference to the more clumsy 'ethnic group' or 'ethnic minority'.

The variety of groupings, the temporary identity of interests and subtle shifts in alliance which are characteristic of urban social relationships pose methodological as well as conceptual problems. From a methodological point of view the difficulty lies in understanding the process by which conflicting principles of association are accomodated; how adjustments are made and contradittions resolved by actors faced with alternative definitions of the situation.

A solution to the problem has been offered by various writers in the form of a technique of study: situational analysis.[2] For an insight into the various groupings in the Ibo population and the relationships between them it is helpful to consider in detail a particular ceremonial event which occurred in the course of fieldwork. This approach follows that of Mitchell, Gluckman and others[3] who regard specific events and ceremonies as useful starting points for the analysis of the social process in general. The heuristic value of such ceremonials as the one described below lies in their tendency to bring together in interaction individuals and groups which normally are segregated. Guests at a wedding, funeral or other family gathering may have little in common apart from their kinship links with the principal actors; in terms of socio-economic status, occupation, neighbourhood, political interests and so on there may be little to unite them. Although this interaction is only temporary, and the event therefore exceptional (even if recurrent, as are weddings and christenings) it focusses attention on the plural

1. The community as a neighbourhood unit attracting strong sentimental attachments is pronounced in 'community studies'. For a general discussion see R. Frankenberg (1966 a).

2. For a discussion of this approach see J. Clyde Mitchell(1966),Frankenberg (1966 b), Van Velsen(1967) and G.K. Garbett(1970).

3. J. Clyde Mitchell(1956); M. Gluckman(1958); Frankenberg(1966 b).

categories of identification and action of individual actors and the style of behaviour thought appropriate for each category. It is the untypical nature of the event that gives it its analytical significance.

The particular social event chosen here as an introduction to the Ibo community is a christening party which took place in the autumn of 1971. A brief description of the participants and the events of the day is followed by an analysis of the various groupings represented there, and of certain incidents which occurred. By way of introduction, a short account of the marriage of the principal actors is useful.

The birth of Michael and Angela's first child was in a sense the final stage in their wedding ceremony since it brought at last the acceptance of Angela as Michael's wife by his relations. The marriage had been opposed on both sides for a variety of reasons. For Angela's family it was a case of wasted resources. 'I sent my child to study, not to marry!' was her father's angry response to the news of their engagement. A married daughter's income benefits her new family rather than the one which has paid for her training and hopes for some return before she leaves home. Michael's people disapproved for reasons of physical and cultural distance between the two families. A marriage of this sort was a breach of the tradition of endogamy in their town. Although Angela's home town was only 20 miles from theirs it was, they maintained, 'too far' for marriage. Strangely, in Michael's view, resistance was stronger among his relations in London - a sister, two first cousins, some distant 'uncles' and some 'in-laws' - than among his immediate family at home. Possibly the former were more aware of the financial and other pressures on students who embark on family life without adequate means of support.

Michael's student status was, in fact, a major reason for embarking on matrimony when he did. He met his future wife during the war when his funds from home were not forthcoming. He was hoping to take a degree course which required full time attendance but was still in the process of acquiring the necessary qualifications for university entrance. He attended evening classes

and worked by day as a porter. Angela had just qualified as a nurse and was earning a small but regular salary which could support both of them while Michael was a full time student. However, the financial aspect was balanced by the need they both felt for emotional support in difficult times. They became engaged in 1969 and married early in 1970 at the end of the war. Both events were attended with celebration, Michael's relations having become largely reconciled to the marriage. Angela's relations in London were few and distant, but they too attended.

Full reconciliation came with the birth of a son, some eighteen months later. Although Angela had been accepted by Michael's people 'because she is a good girl', the addition of a male child to the family brought the final seal of approval. As Angela said, a baby girl would have brought the comment: 'You have done well'. With a boy child, it was :'Now you are really a wife!'

As Anglicans the parents wanted their son to be christened, and a service was planned in a local church, to be followed by a party. Printed invitation cards were sent to thirty couples and single people, and a hand-written notice was placed in the hall of the house where they lived. Michael and Angela had been fortunate in obtaining a service flat in the house, which was owned by an Ibo. They were on good terms with the other tenants, who were all English. A few days before the event the occupants of the flat above, which was considerably larger than Michael's, offered him the use of it for the party. The offer was gratefully accepted, and Michael enlisted the help of these neighbours, young men and women like himself, in organising the party.

On the afternoon in question the few people who intended to go to the service assembled in Michael's flat, where some of them had been for several hours already preparing the food and drink for later that evening, and helping Angela to dress the baby. This gathering was made up of relatives and close friends. It included Michael's sister, two male cousins, a distant male relation of middle age described as an 'uncle', and the senior man from his village in Onitsha town to whose wife Michael was related. Angela's people

were represented by a cousin of her sister's husband, whom she introduced as her 'in-law'. The company were joined by some close friends of the couple and their families who were to be the child's godparents. They included a doctor and his wife and an accountant. The doctor's wife had grown up with Michael's family (as a foster child). The accountant had been his first landlord in Britain, Other friends were an old school mate of Michael's and a nursing colleague of Angela's,both Ibo.

After considerable commotion the party left in a number of cars and arrived at the church half-an-hour late, the the chagrin of two other parties whose children were to be christened - West Indian and English respectively - and the presiding minister. After the ceremony photographs were taken around the font and the group returned to Michael's flat for refreshment.

At about seven o'clock,they repaired to the flat above for t e party, leaving behind several of the mothers with small babies, including Angela and her son. Other guests began to arrive and by eight o'clock most of the seats had been taken. The large room of the flat had been cleared for the occasion, with seats arranged around the walls. At one end a small table spread with a white cloth stood before a set of three empty chairs.

In due course the godparents were invited by the chairman, the senior man from Michael's village, to take their places at the table. Only the men did so; there was no room for the doctor's wife who remained seated with the rest. The chairman welcomed everyone and told them they had something to look forward to:'Kola is coming!'[1] Someone entered the room with a tray of Kola nuts chopped into small pieces. It was offered first to the godparents then circulated around the room, while the chairman announced its passage 'to ndichie and everyone else', thereby acknowledging the distinction between the "elders" and the rest. Then the chairman, amid great joviality, was handed 'a special drink', a bottle of Schnapps[2] with which to invoke the ancestors. Uncorking

1. Nut grown in West Africa and available in some London food stores. A symbol of hospitality used on ceremonial occasions.

2. An alchoholic beverage, similar in taste and appearance to gin,which is popular in Nigeria.

the bottle, he tipped a small amount onto the carpet.[1] As he did so he thanked the ancestors for what had happened (the birth of a child) and prayed for continued peace and prosperity. In the course of his speech a softly spoken woman interrupted him from the floor. She reminded him in gentle and good-humoured reproof that he was speaking in Igbo, thereby implying that some people present - the English visitors - were being excluded. This comment caused general amusement, and the woman's boldness established her as the chairman's wife to those who did not already know, for no other woman could have spoken to him in that way. As he continued, therefore, the chairman made frequent apologies to the non-Ibos present for speaking in Igbo, explaining that 'we are doing things the Ibo customary way.' Finally Michael, who had been standing nearby, thanked the chairman and supporters for their good offices, and the rest of the guests for coming to celebrate with the family. The party commenced; drinks were dispensed by Michael and his friends while his sister supervised the distribution of food. The floor gradually filled with dancing couples.

The drinks gave rise to an incident which, together with some other unforeseen events of the evening, indicated conflicting definitions of the situation. Considered in detail, these events throw light on the pattern of relationships between individuals and groups. First, however, and introduction of the guests is called for.

At the height of the evening, when all expected guests had arrived and families with young children had not begun to depart, there were between sixty and eighty people present. Most were Ibo, and they ranged in age from childhood to mid-sixties. There were equal numbers of men and women, if the wives who remained in the flat below caring for the smallest children are included, and the majority were married. In occupation they ranged widely. There were some who were clearly regarded by themselves and others, as men

1. A practice known as 'pouring libation'.

of distinction, such as doctors and ex-diplomats. The majority were pursuing fairly humble occupations, of a clerical or semi-skilled manual nature, while studying for particular academic or professional qualifications. A few of the younger people were full-time students. Several of the women were nurses.

They were there by virtue of their relationships with Michael, Angela or other guests in whose company they had come. The majority came from Michael's home town of Onitsha, either from his particular village and hence considered as being related to him in some way, or from some other part of the town and known to him and his family from childhood. Some of his affinal kin came from neighbouring towns with which Onitsha has a tradition of intermarriage, based on historical, cultural, social and linguistic similarities. In one of these towns Michael received his secondary education, and some old school mates were among the guests. Others were from a more distant area, Udi, where his father had worked, and where Michael had spent much of his childhood. Michael's older relations had invited one or two of their own friends, who were peers in terms of age and experience. They were either fellow townsmen or ex-colleagues. Among older guests were several invited on account of their lop-sided friendship[1] with Michael and Angela. They were superior in age and economic status and enjoyed esteem by virtue of their past services and advice to the young people. Such was the accountant who now became the baby's godfather. Another was their present landlord, who arrived later in the evening with his wife and another couple, the two wives having attended the same teacher-training college in their youth. Also among the Ibo guests was a single man living in the same neighbourhood whom Michael had met while buying the Sunday papers one day. He came from an altogether different part of Iboland and did not appear to know anyone else present. For much of the time he stood alone, watching the others talking, dancing, eating and drinking.

1. Pitt-Rivers' expression, to denote the peculiar quality of the patron-client relationship. Quoted by Eric Wolf, (1966).

A highly educated professional man, commenting on the social composition of the gathering, remarked with distaste that it was 'not integrated', referring to the differences in occupation and level of sophistication. His neighbour, however, took up this point as an attractive feature of such occasions. 'At gatherings like this (ie. christenings)' he said, with obvious approval, 'rich and poor come together. Even the man who holds heaven on his shoulders will drink and joke with the other....' Various distinctions between the normally segregated groups were emphasised in subtle ways. The landlord, for instance, arrived late and made the slow, deliberate entry of a man of substance. He was treated on arrival with special respect. His wife was seized at the door by Michael's sister and ushered to the bar, where she was announced in a loud whisper as 'the Landlord', to be given prompt service. Another 'big man', a hospital doctor related to Angela, dropped in for a while towards the end of the evening. He did not have much time to spare, and his effort to come was taken as a compliment by Michael and Angela. He greeted Michael's relations as his 'in-laws' then went to join a couple of professional men he knew, one of them a doctor like himself. They had worked together on the committee of the Biafra Medical Association during the war, and now lived in the same affluent suburb of London. In occupational terms this man had little in common with the other guests. He had come out of a sense of family duty, as Angela's relation. In the course of the evening he was introduced to the landlord, the ex-diplomat and the two godfathers, who were his peers in age, and socio-economic status. He and the accountant discovered a mutual aquaintance and after chatting for some time the two men exchanged telephone numbers.

Like other family occasions among the Ibos in London - weddings, funerals, send-off parties - this christening party was fairly homogeneous in terms of area of origin. Most of the guests were from Onitsha town, the exceptions being Michael's affinal kin from neighbouring Western Ibo towns, and from Angela's town to the east of Onitsha. Other exceptions were the Udi people,

related to him through their contact during his childhood in Enugu, the capital, which was located in their area; the friends of his relations; his landlord and people he had known at school or met in London. The last group included the English people.

The party brought into interaction individuals and groups normally segregated. People from different local communities in Iboland were drawn together by virtue of their relationship with Michael, and many met each other for the first time. Similarly, the financially successful, described as those 'doing well' (qualified people earning respectable incomes, and owning property) and the less fortunate who were 'struggling', would not normally have interacted unless they belonged to the same town union or had other local interests in common.

The few non-Ibo guests at the party consisted of an Austrian au pair girl who had come in the company of a young Ibo man; the 'daily minder', an English neighbour who was paid to care for the new baby during the day while his parents were at work; and six co-tenants of the couple. One of the latter, an elderly English spinster, remained seated with the rest of the female company in the lounge. The five young men and women to whom the flat belonged ranged themselves behind the 'bar' in the hall and proceeded, by arrangement with Michael, to serve the drinks.

This arrangement led to the first of four verbal exchanges of the evening which highlighted certain groupings and revealed conflicting definitions of the situation. A group of Michael's townspeople were surprised and somewhat displeased to see white people running the bar. People whom to Michael and Angela were neighbours and friends were categorised by these guests as outsiders, people with whom they normally interacted only in the workplace or other structured situations.[1] Their presence demanded standards of reserve and politeness alien to the expected party atmosphere. They told their host, in Igbo, that if they had known the party was for white people they would not

1. On the nature of structured and unstructured relationships in urban situations see J.C. Mitchell (1966) p. 51-6.

have come. (The same group remained behind to continue drinking long after the party had officially ended and the rest of the guests had deperted. They retired with the family to the flat below and remained there for much of the night. When Angela, who was trying to sleep in the same room, protested from time to time at the noise, they told her to go back to sleep and called for more whisky. They were, in this situation, behaving as fellow townsmen whose right it was to stay and enjoy the hospitality of one of their number. In Michael and Angela's view, however, they were guests who had overstayed their welcome.)

The drink gave rise to another incident of a potentially more disruptive nature. Michael came across one of his uncles in the act of pocketing a bottle of whisky. He regarded this as a breach of the rules a guest should observe and asked him to leave. The uncle, in great indignation, threatened to report him to the Unitsha elders for such disrespectful behaviour, and later did so. He regarded it as his right as a member of the family to share in the bounty Michael displayed. Michael's conduct towards him as a senior relative was reprehensible. Michael himself said later in explanation of his relation's action that his people thought he was very rich because he stayed at home a lot. (The implication being that he had enough at home to keep him contented). As for his uncle's threat, the town union was of no consequence to him. It had no moral authority in London and he had no reason to fear the words or deeds of the elders. It existed merely for the arrangement of social events and was a forum for gossip, which was the reason for his staying at home. His uncle obviously held a different view of the matter. As far as he was concerned the town elders were Michael's parents' representatives in London and had moral authority over the actions of the younger townspeople.

The lack of congruence in expectations between old and young was reflected in another brief exchange. A young man of about thirty was engaged in conversation with one of the English girls present. An older man, in his early forrties, approached them and invited the girl to dance. The younger man responded, 'We are talking; please.....(leave us)'. The older man repeated

his request for a dance expecting the younger man to give way to him. The young man said again, with some impatience, 'We are talking. Please -.' The older man departed in silence. He withdrew, he said later, because he did not want a young man to insult an elder. This was an acknowledgement of the fact that, had he persisted, the young man's failure to accede to him would have led to angry words between individuals who in customary terms should maintain relations of reserve and respect. In the present situation he had no means of enforcing the customary norm and could only have lost face by staying there. In the circumstances he had no alternative but to withdraw, and thereby avoid the possibility of a confrontation.

The final incident reflected cleavages of a different nature, for place of origin emerged as a basis for solidarity and exclusion. A young man and woman who had arrived together appeared to be having an argument. The immediate cause seemed to be their differing tastes in music. But relations had been strained all evening, for reasons which become clear when the girl was heard to declare that, although he was highly educated, the young man did not know her worth (appreciate her). It transpired that they had been cohabiting for some time, with no immediate plans for marriage, a situation in which the girl was becoming increasingly anxious. The cause of the dispute is interesting for the light it throws on marital status. More important here are the attempts made by others present to reconcile the pair.

The first to intervene was Ukafor,[1] a man from the same area as they -, in the northern part of Ibo land. He felt he had a duty and responsibility to settle the problem on account of this tie. The young man, however, assured him that nothing was wrong, and Ukafor withdrew. Shortly afterwards the girl's raised voice was causing consternation, especially to Michael and to senior people present. An Unitsha man who heard the commotion came in his capacity as an 'elder' and told them to 'shut up!' He reminded them that a man and a woman should only quarrel at home, and offered to leave the party early to drive

1. All names in the text are fictitious.

them home to finish the argument. This offer together with the man's high status and the absence of any connection between himself and the couple underlined the gravity of the situation. Finally, a woman who had come with the couple but was not from their area called on Okafor, someone from their area, to appeal to them again. He did so on grounds of local pride. They should not, he urged, expose themselves before the Onitsha people but, as Udi people, settle the matter peacefully. Neither should they expose their relationship, of de facto man and wife, to people who were not interested in their affairs, when they had not even informed their own people about it. The matter ended there with the young woman leaving the party.

There was, in fact, an extra and powerful element in Okafor's argument which gave weight to his appeal. The couple were united with him as 'wa wa' people in relation to most of the others present. The people of their area, 3 administrative divisions in northern Iboland, had geographical, linguistic and cultural similarities which distinguished them from southern Ibos. They had, since the earliest penetration of Iboland by Europeans, been regarded by the riverain Onitshas and southerners as hinterland peoples, uncivilised and inferior. This image lingered on, as did the term 'wa-wa' which had come to express it. The 'wa-wa' people in London were consciously united on account of this ascribed identity.

On one level, Okafor and the disputing couple interacted freely with the Onitsha guests at the party. They were all part of the same broad socio-cultural unit in Iboland known as Old Onitsha Province, and as such enjoyed relations of cordiality and solidarity vis-a-vis the southern Ibos in London. They were friends of Michael, known to him from the days when he lived in their town as a boy. But the traditional cleavage between their two areas became the basis for a redefinition of the situation in order to settle an argument.

These incidents, together with the general composition of the gathering, indicate that people are categorised in a variety of ways; that different people adopt different categories; and that categories are changed according to the situation.

People are categorized in a variety of ways. They are fitted into categories based on race and ethnic group; on place of origin, on occupation, age and sex. Distinctions are drawn between 'whites' and 'us'; between Unitsha townspeople and Udi people; kin and non-kin; old and young; high status and low status. Different people adopt different categories. Thus Michael's neighbour' are other people's 'whites'. The senior people are 'elders' endowed with authority, to some and 'equals' to others. And different categories are adopted in different situations. Fellow guests become 'those Unitshas' to be distinguished from 'we Wa-Was', a fellow guest becomes a fellow 'wa-wa' appealing to local pride and loyalty. A fellow townsman becomes a guest who has outstayed his welcome.

This case study helps to provide an answer to the question of Ibo identity. The individuals who fall within the scope of the study are those who are subjectively defined as 'Ibo' by virtue of descent and socio-cultural affinity and in the circumstances of life in Britain are drawn into interaction with others similarly designated. Defined in terms of identity and interaction it is possible to identify a social unit, called for convenience a 'community', whose boundaries are relatively clear cut. The context for interaction is provided by economic, legal and political factors in the environment. Having established the nature of the unit for analysis we come to more practical considerations, the objective characteristics of the Ibos as individuals. Answers are sought to questions about the Ibos' activities and objectives, their location and style of life. Attention turns to the demographic characteristics of the population; their historical circumstances and pattern of settlement.

Characteristics of the Population.

a. Demography. It is difficult to say with certainty how many Ibos there are in London at the present time. Information gleaned from a variety of

sources indicates approximately 3,500 adults in Great Britain[1], of whom between 2,500 and 3,000 are resident in the Greater London area.[2] The total population in London including children may be in the region of 4,000.

Men outnumber women in the ratio of about three to one. The census conducted in the field in 1971-2 (hereafter referred to as the Census)[3] gives a lower ratio (aaproximately 3 : 2) but it is likely that single men are underrepresented and married couples overrepresented here. The Agent General's Directory of Eastern Nigerian Students gives a ratio of 4 : 1, but this excludes working wives who follow no course of study, a number which is likely to have risen since 1965 when the Directory was compiled. Neither does it allow for the influx of women in recent months who have come either to join their husbands or to marry, to work or to study. In the few Divisional Union registers which include both sexes, the proportions range widely, suggesting considerable local variations. In Unitsha Urban Divisional Union in the U.K. the female population is a fifth of the whole; in Etiti Union it is half. The same variation exists at the level of town and clan. In Nnewi Division, one town union has a sex ratio of 5 : 1 in favour of the men;

1. Sources: 1965 Directory of Eastern Nigerian Students in Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland and Continent of Europe, produced by the Office of the Agent General for Eastern Nigeria; Divisional Assembly Register of Biafrans in London, 1970; Biafra Office Register, London 1969-1970; British Council Statistical Supplement on Overseas Students in Britain, 1969-70; For a discussion of these sources and the problems of population statistics, see Appendix 1.

2. It is sometimes difficult to decide whether an Ibo is resident in London or in the provinces. A man whose course of study requires him to leave London for a time may choose to live in two places rather than move his whole family. There is a case of an individual who works in London during the week and rejoins his family in the midlands each weekend. A doctor who practices in a Welsh hospital spends most weekends with his family in London. A young man registered in the London branch of his clan union is in fact studying in Switzerland. To the extent that these people are involved in the social activities of the Ibos in London they are included in the research. It is not known how many lead a nomadic existence of this sort, but it is unlikely to be many.

3. For details of its compilation see Appendix I.

in another the ratio is only 2 : 1. In several cases, of which Afikpo is an example, the numbers of men and women are equal.[1]

It seems likely, therefore, that the overall ratio lies in the region of three men to every woman. The change which has occurred since 1965 when the ratio was four to one is explained by legal and political factors discussed at length in later sections.

A large proportion of men and the majority of women are married. Of the 489 men in the Census, 64% (312) are married, 28% (136) are single and the rest are either separated, divorced, widowed or living alone in Britain while their wives are elsewhere.[2] The equivalent figures for women are 80% (262) married, 9% (30) single, 7% (21) divorced or separated, and 4% (14) widowed or separated by force of circumstances.

The broad categories of 'single' and 'married' conceal certain ambiguities. In the category of 'single men' for instance, there are men who are married by Ibo custom but describe themselves as 'single' or 'engaged', since the marriage is as yet unconsummated. The families at home have made the customary arrangements but the new bride or fiancee has yet to arrive in Britain. In the category of'married men' are included single men living with common law wives and the offspring of the union. To the extent that their relationship indicates commitment and permanence, they ragard themselves and are regarded by others as married.

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1. The use of geographical units in Iboland in respect of a popul tion domiciled in London requires an explanation. Their use is in part dictated by the form of the Divisional Assembly Register, whose component union registers are a major source of information. Before the Divisional Assembly was established in 1968 for the purpose of fund raising, some Biafrans had suggested that funds should be raised on the basis of London postal districts. This idea barely received a hearing. It was decided instead to make use of the existing institutional structure of town and divisional unions which cut across geographical areas and other social groupings. The community of origin in Iboland provided the major unit of identification and as such was the most effective basis for fund raising. The people best able to supply population statistics were those who were strategically placed in terms of Ibo social structure - the town union officials. Hence the adoption of these units in the analysis.

2. These percentages are consistent with the complete figures gained for Ibos from six towns and clans (Awka, Etiti, Mbieri, Emekuku, Uboro and Abariba). Despite internal variations in the ratio of married to single men, the communities have between them 123 married men and 32 single, 76% and 20% respectively.

The third and fourth categories include people who for some reason or other are not living with their legal wives. The third group consists of those whose marriages have broken down. In the fourth are men who choose or are forced by circumstances to live alone, either because they are widowers or because they have not been able to afford to bring their wives to Britain. Both of these categories are probably underrepresented in the Census.[1] The incidence of marital breakdown is not easily detected, because failure in marriage has wide social repercussions and is kept from the knowledge of outsiders at all costs (as we shall see).[2] Also cases of involuntary separation through force of circumstance, are difficult to recognise. It is likely that some men who are included in the single men category are in fact in this situation. Some of the 'involuntary separations', similarly, are probably broken marriages.

TABLE I Sex and marital status of the London Ibo population, (Source: Census 1971).

STATUS	MEN		WOMEN		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Single	136	28	30	9	166	20
Married	312	64	262	80	574	70
Separated/ Divorced	17	3	21	7	38	5
Widowed/ Spouse in Nigeria	24	5	14	4	38	5
TOTAL	489	100	327	100	816	100

1. The files of the Commonwealth Students' Childrens' Society provided invaluable information in respect of marital instability. The statistics derived from this source may, however, be misleading for the reason that an organisation of this kind tends to attract a disproportionate number of cases of marital breakdown - 18 out of approximately 100 fell into this category.

2. This is particularly the case at the social level with which this study is predominantly concerned. For marital conduct, it appears, is class specific. Success in marriage is an attribute of status. The incidence of breakdown is therefore difficult to estimate. Reluctance to disclose information is greatest of all in the sphere of marital stability, and on no account would informants reveal names. While the incidence of breakdown is thought by the Ibos to be high, and on the increase, a comparison of several unnamed cases leads to the suspicion that the actual number of breakdowns may be few. The circulation of rumours concerning a handful of cases gives a false impression of numbers.

Adult Ibos range in age from late teens to mid-sixties, but most are between 25 and 40.[1] The men are slightly older, on average, than the women. The average age of the former is between 31 and 34. The average Ibo woman is in her late twenties.

TABLE 2. Age and sex distribution in the London Ibo population. (Source: Census 1971).

AGES	MEN		WOMEN		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
< 20	1	1	8	2	9	1
21-24	7	1	25	8	32	4
25-27	28	6	82	25	110	14
28-30	89	18	77	24	166	20
31-34	168	34	88	27	256	33
35-37	85	17	27	8	112	14
38-40	49	10	12	4	61	7
41-50	53	16	4	1	57	6
51+ I	9	2	4	1	13	1
TOTAL	489	100	327	100	816	100

Note I. The age distribution in the London population is not, apparently, typical of the Ibo population in Britain as a whole. There is, for instance, a higher proportion of older men (41 and over) in the Liverpool community, comprising individuals who arrived in Britain as merchant seamen and settled here. Although it was not unfortunately possible to conduct a systematic study of any communities in the provinces, a preliminary observation on a brief field trip to Liverpool confirmed this point (which had been made by an informant in London).

b. History. Part of the explanation for the clustering of ages around thirty lies in the Nigeria-Biafra War, which began in July 1967 and ended in January 1970. Almost half of the Ibomen in London came between 1960 and 1963. They were then in their early or mid-twenties and in the normal course of events would have returned home four or five years later with the qualifications they had set out for. This was the pattern established by their predecessors.

1. Information on ages come from the Census, and is substantiated by individual estimates of their own local communities.

But for the war, which interrupted their studies and disrupted their plans, the majority of Ibos in London today would probably now be in Nigeria.

Before elaborating on this point, attention must be given to the pattern of arrival in Britain, and the reasons which, over the years, have brought Ibos here. The majority of people here now have been in the United Kingdom, if not in London itself, for at least five years. For many of the men though not the women, the length of stay is considerably greater.

TABLE 3. Year of arrival in Britain and sex distribution in the London Ibo Population.(Source: Census 1971).

YEAR	MEN		WOMEN		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
≤ 1959	48	10	20	6	68	8
1960-1963[1]	206	42	76	23	282	35
1964-Apr.67[2]	162	33	164	50	326	40
May 67-1969[3]	39	8	26	8	65	8
1970-1972	34	7	41	13	75	9
TOTAL	489	100	327	100	816	100

Notes. 1. Beginning of period marked by Nigerian Independence.
2. End of period marks the imposition of the naval blockade of the Eastern Region.
3. Period of Nigeria - Biafra War which ended in January 1970.
4. This figure does not include those students who completed their studies and left before the outbreak of the war. The absolute number of Ibos entering Britain during this period is far higher. If the now departed Ibos were included in the table the peak of entry might well be shifted from the period of 1964-7 to the one before.

A few people (8.0%) have been in Britain for over 12 years; 35% have lived here for between nine and twelve years. The largest proportion (40%) have been here for between five and eight years, and the rest, almost 17%, have lived here for less than five years. The majority of Ibos in London at the present time came during the first half of the 1960s, and have been here for eight years on average.

Several questions are prompted by these percentages. What did the Ibos come to achieve? If they have achieved it, why are they still here and what are they doing? The reasons for their migration may be given in terms of conscious purpose and of the environmental factors which shaped their objective circumstances and prompted their decision to come.

The stated purpose of the journey to Britain varies according to sex. Reasons given by the men fall into five broad categories; the women's are more diverse. The most frequent reason given by both sexes is Study,(65%) this being the sole reason for over four fifths of the men and the predominant reason for a third of the women.[1]

TABLE 4. Stated Purpose of Migration and sex distribution in the London Ibo Population (Source: Census 1971).

PURPOSE	MEN		WOMEN		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No	%
Study	421	86	112	34	533	65
Work	31	6	6	2	37	5
Marriage	-	-	100	31	100	12
Join Husband	-	-	68	21	68	8
Accompany Spouse	-	-	22	7	22	3
Vacation/Short Trip	19	4	3	1	22	3
Came as a child	9	2	13	3	22	3
Refugee, stranded abroad	9	2	3	1	12	1
TOTAL	489	100	327	100	816	100

The category of study includes all levels and all subjects. The range of both is considerable. In the 1960s people came for the General Certificate of Education, for technical and professional diplomas and degrees, for post-graduate courses and medical specialisation. Most came initially for G.C.E. examinations or preliminary technical qualifications (O.N.C., O.N.D. etc.) with a more advanced course in mind.

1. Predominant rather than exclusive reason, since many of them had marriage in mind but did not come as the fiancee of the man they hoped to marry.

The most popular courses among the men are Law (18%); Engineering (12.3%); Accountancy and Management (each 7.6%); Banking and Medicine (each 6%) and Economics (5% approx.)[1]. The remaining 40% of students are spread among a wide variety of subjects including insurance and chartered secretaryship; journalism and film making; architecture and surveying; social administration and transport studies.[2] The women most frequently choose nursing (33%); private secretaryship (16%); catering and home economics (11.3%).

There have been changes over time. The early arrivals were more likely to have chosen law in preference to technical subjects such as banking, accountancy and engineering.[3] The level of course has also changed among student entrants. The rising cost of education in Britain,[4] together with legal restrictions on entry and the growing facilities for study in Nigeria, has meant that the demand for basic courses has slackened. In recent years there has been a tendency for students to migrate only for the completion of their education. The proportion of graduates and doctors seeking specialist qualifications has risen in proportion to those arriving for first degrees or basic technical and professional qualifications.[5]

The next most frequent purpose of migration, in the women's case, was marriage. Almost as many came to marry as to study, and a considerable number came to join husbands already here.[6] In a few cases women came in the company of their husbands who had been posted to London by the Nigerian government or other employment agency.

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1. The percentages do not include second choices, courses taken after the first qualification has been obtained. For instance, chartered secretaries take up law, business studies or banking; other popular combinations are economics and banking; insurance and business studies; law and management. The continuation of study is as much a legal as an intellectual requirement. See p. 48
2. These percentages, based on the Census, are substantiated by the Directory of Eastern Nigerian Students. According to the latter the six most popular subjects among the men are law, engineering, accountancy, medicine, economics and management, in that order.
3. Directory of Eastern Nigerian Students, preface.
4. In 1968 the government subsidy for commonwealth students was withdrawn.

(5 and 6 continued on page 34)

The latter fall into the category of people whose primary purpose was to work in Britain. The number in this group is comparatively small, only 5.0% of the total. It includes employees of Nigerian Airways and other public corporations; staff of the Nigerian High Commission; Nigerian owned enterprises such as the Africa Continental Bank, and British firms in Nigeria whose employees are seconded to the parent company in the U.K. Other men in this category came independently in the years after the Second World War, to make a living as best they could. They were motivated by the desire to travel and see the world, and the 'mother country' in particular. A tailor, for instance, sought to 'broaden his horizons' and once here he worked at his trade with some success. Another man who came soon after the war set himself up in the retail trade, handling West African foodstuffs. One of the oldest residents was sent early in the 1950s by his master, a wealthy trader, to give evidence in a court case against some shipping agents concerning lost cargo. He decided to remain in Britain and went into business on his own account.

Men who came in the capacity of workers are among the oldest established residents and in addition are the most senior in age. Paradoxically, the group of long established residents includes some of the youngest in the population. These are the people who have been in Britain since childhood, nearly 3%(22) in all. Some of them were sent at the age of eleven or twelve to be educated at English public boarding schools. In some cases they are the offspring of eminent men who themselves had studied in Britain in the 1930s and 1940s. Others were sent by fathers who had attained eminence in the political sphere and saw this, perhaps, as a way of converting wealth into status and guaranteeing their sons a place in the national elite.

5.(Cont'd from page 33). There are,in fact, more Nigerian postgraduate students than undergraduates in British universities at the present time. The British Council gives a figure of 321 Nigerian postgraduates and 208 undergraduates in 1969-70.

6.(Cont'd from page 33). It is assumed that a wife will try to obtain a qualification of some kind while she is here. Study may be almost as important a reason as marriage for girls who come as fiancees. It is not always easy to distinguish between women who came originally to marry and those who came primarily to study.

The women in this category generally came in the company of their parents whose purpose was to study or work. A few people were born in Britain, the offspring of liaisons between Ibo students and English women in the years after the second world war.

An equal number resident at the time of fieldwork had arrived on vacation or for short business trips.[1] The former includes several parents who made the journey for their children's weddings; it includes Nigerian politicians or higher civil servants on leave or on assignment; and students on vacation from German, Swiss and American Universities. In the same category are a number of students in transit from one university to another. One young man was on his way from Russia to America. He was working in Britain for a few months as a research chemist before travelling on the United States to take up a fellowship there.

The final category consists of refugees, people whose arrival was in a sense involuntary. 1.0% (12) arrived in Britain because they had nowhere else to go. When the war between Nigeria and Biafra broke out, certain people working or studying abroad were stranded. They felt unable to return to Nigeria and were unable to stay in the country in which they were living at the time. Included in this category is a journalist, then deputy editor of a Lagos magazine, who was on an assignment in South Vietnam when the war broke out. It includes employees of Lagos firms who had been seconded for training in Europe. Their courses had ended but their employers were unable to guarantee their safety in Lagos. Another affected group were seamen, who preferred to disembark in Britain rather than return to Nigeria.

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1. The justification for including this category in the resident population is two-fold. Since everyone, at least ideally, is here only temporarily, it is difficult to exclude them on the basis of transcience. For the duration of their stay in London they are in any case easily absorbed into the community, and fully involved in its affairs.

The category of refugees used here is not very satisfactory. Many of the Ibos who came between 1967 and 1970 as students or brides-to-be could equally be described as refugees, to the extent that they were in flight from conditions in Nigeria. However, because the ostensible reason for their migration was the positive desire to study or marry, they are excluded from the category of refugees. Only those people obviously stranded abroad, and women with children who came only to escape the war, are classified as such.

Table 4 indicated the cause of migration in terms of the actors' motivation. For a different kind of explanation we examine the objective circumstances of the Ibos, seeing their migration in the light of political, legal and educational developments in Britain and Nigeria over the last two decades.

The history of the Ibos in London is also the history of the relationship between Britain and Nigeria. It is the history of European trade with West Africa in the fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; of missionary contact and the process of colonization in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; of the attainment of Nigerian independence in recent years; and of the gradual severing of ties which bound Britain to her colonial subjects and conferred certain rights upon them, of which the most meaningful was unrestricted entry into Britain.

Before the right was curtailed in 1962, Ibos had been coming to Britain for a variety of reasons. Comparatively few of the early arrivals remain today, for the majority came to obtain academic qualifications and returned to Nigeria on the attainment of their objective.[1] The number of Ibo students in the U.K. rose sharply in the late 1950s as regional and national independence approached. Some had come in the years immediately after the war and returned to take up lucrative posts. (Several cases of second generation students in Britain were encountered in the course of fieldwork. They include children of the first western trained Ibo doctor, and offspring of two Ibo judges who received their early legal training in Britain in the 1930s.)

1. Sources of information on the early composition of the community were long established residents, the Association of Commonwealth Universities, and the British Council, op.cit.

The event of regional independence in 1957 and national independence three years later contributed to the flow of students. Prospective lawyers, civil servants, secretaries and teachers were sent to acquire the skills necessary to run the government departments and educational institutions of the new state. The peak, according to an individual here at that time, came in the period of 1959 to 1961.[1]

Before Nigerian independence in 1960, and British legislation to control immigration in 1962, Ibos had regarded Britain as a country to which they could come freely and in which they would be welcomed. On the whole, they regarded migration to Britain as a means of acquiring academic and professional qualifications with which to boost their status at home. They did not see England as a land of opportunity where fortunes could be made, though some people, as we have seen, did come solely to seek their fortunes. Although the Ibos have no tradition of migration for work, the history of the Ibos living and working in England goes back a long way. A distinguished predecessor of the people now in London was Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African. As the young slave of an English sea captain, Equiano landed at Falmouth in 1757.[2] The circumstances of his departure from West Africa and arrival in England are very different from those of his successors in the twentieth century. Equiano was kidnapped from his village while his parents were away working on their farm. Owing to his tender years (he was ten or eleven at the time) he was brought back to England with some other slaves who were also regarded as unsuitable for the West Indian market. Equiano bought his freedom at the age of twenty one, and led an active life as a merchant seaman. In the course of his life he tried

1. The trend is confirmed by the Association of Commonwealth Universities' statistics. The Commonwealth Universities Year Book indicates that the number of Nigerians studying in British universities rose from 402 in 1952 to a peak of 1124 in 1961, and thereafter declined.

2. 'Equiano's Travels'. First published 1789. The 1967 Heineman edition is an abridged and edited version of the original autobiography. It deals with his capture in Iboland and subsequent experiences. This work was brought to my attention by an Ibo but in general the story of Equiano is not known.

several times to return to Africa, first as Commissary of Stores for the Black Poor going to Sierra Leone, later as a missionary and an explorer for the Africa Society. His attempts were unsuccessful and he died in London in 1801, after attaining eminence for his work in the movement for the abolition of the slave trade.

The Ibos maintain that, unlike the Yoruba and West Indians, they have never travelled to Britain to find work. So strong is the ideological emphasis on self-improvement through education that, until the Nigeria-Biafra war affected their circumstances, they tended to regard with scorn any Ibo who was not pursuing a course of some kind. Disapproval was extended even to those who worked in order to finance their studies.[1]

In spite of this, paid employment as a prelude to study frequently was the pattern. A man who did not enjoy sponsorship by his town union or other body, and had no private resources, came with a view to financing his studies by paid employment. In some cases this course of action was forced upon him after a year or two by unfortunate circumstances. Either his finances were exhausted, or family obligations called for a change of plan. A man whose case is typical came to London in 1959 with savings which were not really sufficient for his maintenance as a full-time student. His relation in London was equally hard up and they decided to pool their resources. One of them should work to enable the other to study full-time. On the completion of his course he would return to Nigeria, get a good job and send money to his cousin in England so that he, too, could qualify and return home. In the event the arrangement did not work. But by hard work (as a porter in a large department store) and skilfull investment of his savings in a house, the man succeeded eventually in attaining his objective.

1. An informant says that he was looked down upon by his fellow students at London University because he was 'letting the side down' by working for his living. His action, he said, undermined their self-image as 'real students' (people who study full-time).

In 1962 an act of Parliament was passed which effectively curtailed the number of Ibos who could come and make a living in Britain. More important, it limited the chances of men who wanted primarily to study but had to work first in order to do so. The Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 has a long history. It is sufficient here to state the main provisions and explain how they affected the historical development and social composition of the Ibo community. Before 1962, colonial subjects and citizens of independent commonwealth countries had been free to enter and leave Britain at will. This was in keeping with the official philosophy of 'the land of opportunity', and consistent with the relationship of interdependence which had grown up between Britain and her colonies. The years between 1952 and 1962 had seen a great increase in the numbers of commonwealth citizens entering Britain. Outbreaks of violence in various parts of the country between whites and blacks had drawn attention to physical overcrowding and social claustrophobia in neighbourhoods with a large immigrant population.[1] These facts were used in the argument for the control of entry. It was suggested that controls would increase Britain's capacity to absord the immigrants and allow for positive measures of integration, an argument which became official rationale of the 1962 act.[2]

Under the act, restrictions were imposed on the entry of workers and students. Wives and children of men already in Britain were free to enter as before. Workers were required to have work vouchers issued in the country of origin. There were three categories of labour. In category 'A' were those workers who had a specific job to come to. Category 'B' covered those with special qualifications, such as doctors, teachers, graduates and other professionals. Category 'C' consisted of the remainder.[3] Priority was given to categories A and B,

1. These conditions, exposed by immigrants, were frequently attributed to them. For an account of the popular and parliamentary campaigns in the 1950s between the 'Keep Britain White' groups and the 'Keep Britain Tolerant' groups see R. Glass's study of West Indian immigration, "The Newcomers" (1960)
2. Government White Paper, 'Immigration from the Commonwealth' U.K. August 1965.
3. Ibid.

which took up a large proportion of the 20,800 permits issued a year. (By September 1964 they were all taken up by workers in these two categories. In the following year the number of vouchers was cut from 20,800 to 8,500 per annum, and Category 'C' dropped altogether. This was in response to the findings of the Mountbatten Commission of 1964).

Students and visitors did not need work vouchers but were required to have entry certificates, issued by the British representative in the country of origin. According to the official manual for immigration officers,[1] the prospective student should satisfy the officer that 'his purpose in coming to the United Kingdom is to attend a course of study... and that the course will occupy the whole or a substantial part of his time,' by producing 'evidence of acceptance for a course of study... and of ability to meet the cost of the course and of his own maintenance.' If there were any doubts as to the genuineness of his intentions, admission was to be refused. The main objective of this procedure was to expose people attempting to 'use enrolment for a course of study as a means of obtaining admission without a voucher.' (In 1964, an mmendment was introduced to control evasion of the Act by people who posed as students. Students were to be given admission for a specified period only, and the diplomatic staff overseas, whose task it was to issue them with entry certificates, were to be reinforced.) Students were not to engage in regular full-time employment and were expected to leave when their studies were completed.

The effect of these provisions on the social composition of the Ibo population was two-fold. Those Ibos who, prior to 1962, would have come as workers and part-time students, had now to come as full-time students or not come at all. Secondly, the financial and other problems created by full-time study led, among other things, to the migration of wives whose entry as dependents was unrestricted and whose income from full-time employment would help to supplement the family income.

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1. Commonwealth Immigrants Acts 1962 and 1968: Instructions to Immigration Officers. Cmnd 4298, para 18.

Before going into the question of how students lived it is necessary to explain why they came at all. In the early 1960s huge dividends rewarded the man with qualifications in appropriate subjects. P.C.Lloyd describes the vast differentials in wealth and status between the national elite and the majority of the population, in post-independence Nigeria.[1] C. Moller indicates a similar disparity in her study of Onitsha,[2] whose social hierachy, she suggests, may be regarded as a microcosm of the Eastern Region of Nigeria. In the early days of independence, the future seemed assured for individuals with degrees and professional qualifications acquired abroad.

In many cases these qualifications were not obtainable in Nigeria. Although in the early 1960s the rate of university expansion was rapid, there were crucial gaps in the educational system. Professional courses in banking, accountancy and insurance, among others, were not available, since the national professional bodies to award them were non-existent. For men working as unqualified accountants or bank managers the trip to Britain was a prerequisite for advancement.

There was another reason for the journey, however. A qualification acquired abroad, particularly in Britain, carried considerable prestige. The prospects of a London graduate were higher, when it came to getting a job, than those of his locally trained counterpart. Any qualification, for that matter, so long as it had been obtained in Britain, paid dividends. (The following comment on the choice of courses in Britain illustrates this point. 'An Abariba man must get a qualification. If a boy doesn't progress in his chosen field he'll choose something else, cheaper, ie. in which a shorter time is needed to qualify. He may change from Law to chartered secretaryship. Many people do law because with that subject the sponsors get their money back quickly. ie. Law is a remunerative profession. It doesn't matter what course you do; all professional qualifications have high status at home.')

1. P.C.LLOYD (1966); (1967) Chaps 5 and 13; (1971), Chap. 7.
2. C. Moller, unpublished thesis (Ph.D.) London University (1968).

Consequently, students came in large numbers to acquire knowledge 'straight from the horse's mouth', even when the desired course was available in Nigeria.

The figure of Nigerian students in British universities reached its peak in 1962-3, when there were 8,954 in all.[1] It remained at the same high level until 1965, after which it declined fairly sharply. Perhaps the decline can be explained in terms of expanding facilities for study in Nigeria. It is equally likely that the financial problems facing full-time students acted as a deterrent. Perhaps, also, the social climate which had given birth to the 1962 Immigration Act, and the strict enforcement of the provisions of the act by British diplomats in Nigeria, dissuaded many would-be students from attempting the journey.

A more obvious explanation lies in the political events of 1967 and subsequently. It will be recalled that a third of the Ibo men in London at present, and half of the women, came between 1964 and April 1967,[2] Most of the others had arrived earlier. Only a sixth came afterwards. The reasons for the sharp decline after April 1967 include the legal status of commonwealth citizens in Britain, and the official attitude towards Biafrans in particular.

In May 1967 a naval blockade was imposed on the Eastern region of Nigeria. It was followed in July by the outbreak of hostilities which the Nigerian Government regarded as a police action and the secessionist Biafrans took to be a war of national independence.

The issues of the war concern us at this point only in so far as they affected the Ibo migration to Britain. The naval blockade in May 1967 cutoff the exit by sea, and the air war which commenced soon afterwards hampered departure by plane. As Table 3 (p. 31) shows, a considerable number of people did come to Britain during the war years, and some of them came from Nigeria (not all were in the refugee/stranded abroad category). Several crossed the Niger to the Mid-West State, or as Western Ibos living there already, came via Lagos, the

1. The British Council: Overseas Students in Britain, Statistical Supplement, 1969-70, p. 24.
2. Table 3, p. 31.

capital. Others living in Lagos at the outbreak of the war travelled on from there. A few in the Eastern Region (by that time Biafra) braved the somewhat hazardous journey by air.

Although the physical problems involved in leaving Biafra are important the explanation for the drop in numbers of migrants after 1967 is more likely to be found in ideological and legal factors.

Ideologically, Britain's stand in the war made the prospect of seeking refuge here highly unattractive.[1] The legal factor is related to the 1962 Immigration Act. The provisions of the act made entry difficult for anyone who did not possess a work permit, and who lacked the financial resources necessary for a prearranged course of study. Few people fell into the first category, though there were one or two. A Shell executive, for instance, was posted to the company headquarters in London for his own safety. The potential student migrants were more drastically affected. The impact of the war was felt almost immediately in the area of personal savings. Apart from the wealthy, who dwindled in number, few families had the financial resources to send a son or daughter overseas.

Women had fewer problems in travelling to Britain than men, provided they could prove their dependent status. Even in their case, however, money was required to make the necessary arrangements in Lagos; and proving that one was the dependent of a United Kingdom resident was not always easy. This point is illustrated in the following case.

> Okoro,[2] a student of engineering since 1960, applied in 1968 to bring his wife to England to join him. They had been engaged since his departure, and married by customary law in 1966, since which time he had been maintaining her. Under the provisions of the 1962 Act, a wife 'is entitled to admission for

1. Letters are still received from relations in Nigeria who are incredulous that their son 'can still bear to remain in that place'. (i.e. Britain).
2. For this case and some of the following, and for the elucidation of certain points of law, thanks are due to the National Council for Civil Liberties in the U.K.

settlement provided she is in possession of an entry certificate granted for that purpose.'[1] The problem in this case was in persuading the official in the British High Commission in Lagos to issue her with an entry certificate. The letters of association produced by the woman as documentary evidence of the marriage were in his view inadequate. He doubted whether the marriage had been contracted already. In his view, it was only proposed; he refused to allow her entry as the wife of a United Kingdom resident. Okoro appealed for help to the National Council for Civil Liberties in London. They pointed out that the woman was entitled to enter as a fiancee if not as a wife, and advised him to produce evidence of a proposed marriage.[2] Okoro did so, with the help of the local Registrar, and after a long delay the permit was granted.

For Ibos who could claim entry as neither worker, student nor wife, the only solution was to enter Britain with a visitor's permit (valid for a limited period) and attempt to change his status when in the country. The following case may be cited to show the difficulty such people encountered and the reasons for it.

Ike was working as a systems analyst in Lagos when his employers sent him in 1966 to Beirut. When the Six Day War broke out in June 1967 he was evacuated and came to the United Kingdom because hostilities between Nigeria and Biafra prevented him from returning home. Ike entered the country with a visitor's permit and worked at the London branch of his former employers. on the expiry of the six months period allowed to him as a visitor his employers insisted that he should return to Lagos, so he left the firm and found other employment. At the same time he embarked on a course of part-time study which did not, however, qualify him for student status.[3] Not having a valid work permit he was told by the Home Office to leave the country within three months. Representations were made on his behalf but Home Office Officials, acting on the advice of the British High Commission in Lagos, said that he had no real reason to fear for his safety in Nigeria. However,

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1. Cmnd. 4298, para 34.
2. Para 45, 'a woman seeking to enter the United Kingdom for marriage to a man resident here should be admitted if the Immigration Officer is satisfied that the proposed marriage will take place within a reasonable time...'
3. Students must be full-time only, though a full-time student is permitted to do some part-time work to supplement his income.

they accepted that he was apprehensive and agreed to an extension of three months in the first instance. This was followed by a series of temporary renewals. Ike was finally told in 1970 that the situation in Nigeria was back to normal and he was required to leave at once.

The ambivalence of the British government towards Biafrans was a reflection of its attitude on the Nigeria-Biafra War. It did not recognise Biafra as a sovereign state, and Biafrans were regarded as Nigerian citizens. Because the British Government supported the Nigerians it was in something of a dilemma with regard to Biafrans in London. It could not, unlike certain Scandinavian countries, extend the official status of refugees to those trying to enter the country,[1] or waive the regulations for those already here. The dilemma was particularly acute in the early stages of the war, before any official policy had evolved for dealing with the cases of Biafrans.

The position is seen most clearly with regard to individuals who came before the war as students but were forced by circumstances to take up employment. The majority of Ibos in London had come solely for the purpose of study. Those entering after 1962 were not to engage in full-time employment or to stay on after completing their studies; those coming after 1964 had a time limit stamped on their passport. To take a job was to act in breach of their conditions of entry.[2]

The outbreak of the war affected the majority of them financially, since remittances were no longer received from home. According to the 1965 Directory of Eastern Nigerian Students, the majority of students, in Britain (2,380 out of 2,527) were privately financed.[3] They relied on their families or their own savings for maintenance and fees. Others, such as the Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation Scholars, and students who received grants via the

1. Some nurses who had cared for children in Gabon came as displaced persons but none officially as refugees.

2. Cmnd. 4295, 'Commonwealth Citizens: Control after Entry', paras 14 & 16.

3. These figures are not altogether reliable, for students are reluctant to disclose the source of their incomes. In the case of scholarship holders, this is founded on the fear that others might try to deprive them of it. In at least one case known personally the individual told the compilers of the Directory that he was privately financed, when in fact he was in receipt of an award.

Nigerian High Commission in London, were also affected. Some men who had wives in Britain were able to continue in full-time study but for many the only solution was to take a job.

Before the official review of the situation in 1968 the cases which came to the attention of the Home Office received unsympathetic treatment. In some cases conditions were changed or revoked after representation by the National Council for Civil Liberties, by M.P.s and solicitors, but more often the result was a temporary renewal or deportation. In most cases, however, Biafrans did not apply formally for their conditions to be changed. This was partly because they expected to be sent back to Nigeria if they did so, an alarming prospect; partly also because they regarded work as a temporary measure and constantly expected the war to come to an end and conditions return to normal. Some people assumed that the government would turn a blind eye to the breach of regulations, in view of the unusual circumstances.[1] This, indeed, appeared to be so in some cases. Official policy, as it evolved, was to issue those who appealed for an extension of stay with a three months extension in the first instance. In some cases conditions were revoked altogether, and men who had at first been ordered to leave were allowed to remain indefinitely. Such, for instance was the case of Nwafor, a radiographer whose conditions were revoked because he was working as a hospital technician. In another instance, a trainee accountant was allowed to stay, although his case was apparently no different from those of others who had had to leave. Different treatment was meted out to seemingly identical cases because of the discretionary nature of decisions. It reflected the different attitudes of different officials, and occasionally the improper excercise of power.

1. The view is often expressed that a person cannot be deported after living in Britain for five years. This is correct (Cmnd 4295 para 32b) but he would be expected to take up British nationality or else leave. Otherwise he would be in breach of conditions and liable for prosecution and a fine of £70, though not deportation.

Individuals who did not bother to apply to the Home Office and whose cases came to their attention were apprehended and dealt with severely.[1] One of the first to be taken up by the National Council for Civil Liberties may be cited as a typical example of the problem, and fate, of such people.[2]

Bassey Udoh arrived in Britain in 1965, at the age of 27, to take a course in Cost and Works Accountancy. His father, a general merchant, was financing him, and Udoh paid the fees for the first two years of his five year course in advance. In December 1966 the supply of funds from home stopped, but he managed to continue regular study until March 1967, when he took a part-time cleaning job. Three months later he sat for his part 2 exam and failed.

Between June 1967 and January 1969 Udoh worked in a variety of jobs, most of them related to his studies. He had in the meantime registered as an associate membdr of the Institute of Cost and Works Accountants and begun a correspondence course to 'keep his brain agile'[3] until he was able to attend a full-time course again. In January 1969 he heard from his family again, and, hopeful of an end to the war, he applied for a place at a London college which offered an intensive course (one year instead of two). His application was successful but the war did not come to an end and he had to refuse the place offered to him.

Udoh was determined to continue his course and registered in September 1969 as an evening student at a local technical college. Just as he was leaving his office one evening to go to college he was apprehended by the police who arrested him and charged him with being in breach of his conditions of entry. An order was made for his deportation.

From this point Udoh's story becomes untypical.

On the advice of the National Council for Civil Liberties, he appealed to be deported to Ireland. There he made an appeal to the Immigration Appeals Sub-Tribunal for a revokation of the deportation order. The appeal was allowed as it was clear from his evidence that he had not deliberately violated the law in order to stay in Britain indefinitely. His action had been a misguided response to a difficult situation. Her Majesty's Government

1. Cases come to attention for a variety of reasons, such as prosecution for a criminal offence. A 'visitor' paid a cheque to a hire purchase company for a radiogramme. The cheque bounced. The matter was reported to the police who arrested him and eventually he was deported.

2. Taken from the records of the Immigration Appeals Tribunal. Appeal No. TH/291/1970.

3. Not as a final solution since correspondence courses do not entitle one to student status.

appealed against the decision to the full Tribunal but the appeal was lost and Udoh was allowed to remain for the completion of his studies.

The legal position after the war was, and still is, far from clear, How many of those who applied for extensions still remain and how many yielded to the pressure to leave is not known. The official policy on the matter is expressed in a letter written in May 1971 by a Home Office spokesman to the general secretary of the National Council for Civil Liberties. The letter denied the purge of Nigerians here in breach but pointed out that the temporary nature of the extension had been made clear to those who applied for it. The Nigerian Government had declared a general amnesty, and Her Majesty's Government could not give preferential treatment to people from the former Eastern Region. It would still, however, give sympathetic consideration to any case of genuine hardship and deal with each application on its own merits.

As we have seen, however, most Ibos did not apply for extensions. Many did not need to. Those who had come before 1962 were not subject to any of the restrictions imposed by the Act of that year. A considerable number had obtained British nationality. Many more could have done so if apprehended since they had been in the country for five years or more.[1] Others had engaged in a series of temporary jobs for which work permits were not required, or embarked on further courses of study, to retain their student status. If the course of study had been abandoned before completion, the aim after the war was invariably to resume it full time or change to another which could be completed in a relatively short time.

c. Settlement Pattern. The Ibos are not contentrated in a single residential area of the city. Neither are they evenly dispersed throughout the region. There are local concentrations both north and south of the River Thames. In

1. In 1971 a High Court Appeal Judgement decided that five years had to be five years spend legally. It is not possible to obtain British nationality after, for instance, eight years of intermittent study and work. Before the Judgement, the position was not clear, and irregularities in stay did not prevent the acquisition of British nationality.

South London the most densely populated areas are Clapham, Balham, Tooting, Brixton, and Stockwell. In the north the most popular districts are Stamford Hill, Stoke Newington, Islington and Finsbury Park. Ibos are found also in Finchley, Golders Green, Willesden, Cricklewood and Kilburn. In parts of East London, such as Hackney and Dalston and contiguous areas they are well represented.

There must be few Ibos who are not within walking distance of an Ibo neighbour, and many, especially in the areas of high density such as Islington, who are in calling distance. In what were once large, well-kept victorian family houses in Dalston, Islington and Finsbury Park, now the much written-about rooming houses of the twilight zones, Ibos live in close proximity with Yorubas, West Indians, Irish and English residents. In such areas there are adjacent houses each occupied by three or four Ibo families. In others, by contrast, the Ibo family may be the sole occupants of a large semi-detached house in a quiet suburban street, where they are the only non-English or non-white residents. But this is less likely to be the case.

The population live scattered over an area of approximately five hundred square miles, with a total resident population of almost eight million.[1] Within the large geographical and administrative unit of Greater London they are found in ecological areas as contrasted as Golders Green and Kings Cross.

A new arrival often settles in the neighbourhood of his friends and relations. The rate of mobility is fairly high but moves are restricted to within a particular area. Generally speaking, people develop a preference for the area in which they first settled and try to remain either north or south of the river. There are, of course, exceptions to this pattern. One family with several children has in the last ten years lived in Clapham, Stoke Newington, Enfield and Finchley. Another family has recently moved from rented accomodation in West Hampstead to a house of their own in East London. The tendency to move further afield

1. South East Economic Planning Council, (1967), p. 85.

in recent months is explained by the movement towards home ownership. The current state of the property market requires some flexibility in outlook.

The Problem. The object of analysis has been given as the internal organisation of an ethnic minority. Thus stated, there is no indication of the theoretical problem which properly constitutes the core of sociological research. In approaching the Ibos in London two assumptions have operated to define a problem whose solution occupies the remainder of the thesis.

The first assumption is that there are certain major variables whose interaction should be the main concern of a sociological analysis. The second is that an understanding of the present requires an historical perspective which takes account of this interaction. The structure of the contemporary Ibo community reflects the interdependence of major variables, and is the result of historical processes. It is the end product of a number of significant changes which have taken place in the last few decades. Changing structural circumstances - economic, political, legal, demographic - have produced concomitant changes in the sphere of interpersonal relations. The interaction of these variables at the present time is illuminated by an examination of their interaction at different periods.[1] A sociological analysis of the contemporary social structure of the Ibos requires a study of the interdependence of the major variables in different historical periods. The immediate task is to identify and isolate the relevant variables and to delineate the time periods in which their interplay can be examined.

The choice of variables is governed by several considerations, both theoretical and practical in nature. The major variables in the social process fall into two categories: structural and symbolic.[2] The structural variables

1. M. Gluckman (1958); A. Cohen (1965); (1969a), p. 25-28.

2. A. Cohen (1969 b), p. 216-223. The classification of variables follows A. Cohen's though the demographic variable is an inclusion which departs from his scheme. It is included here as an external factor which affects the symbolic sphere of marriage and kinship rather than as an aspect of power relations.

consist of demographic, economic, legal and political factors in a sense external to the social relationships which make up a community.[1] They provide the context in which people interact. The economic factor includes source of income, employment and housing. Closely related is the legal factor, which determines the right to undertake employment, and the status and security of migrants as students or workers. The political factor, again, is closely related to the other two. It concerns relations between the country of origin and the country of residence which are reflected in the legal status of migrants, and relations of power associated with economic inequality between members and outsiders and among the members themselves.

The second set of variables includes kinship and marriage; friendship; ritual and ceremonial. These, too, are interrelated, As Cohen points out, ritual symbols form part of most kinship systems and vice versa. Types of friendship, too, are affected by the prevalence of kinship symbols.[2]

The sphere of kinship includes relations between relatives by birth and marriage, and between townspeople. It concerns the recognition of kinship ties and of rights and obligations of kinship. One aspect of marriage are patterns of courtship and heterosexual friendships; the choice of a spouse and procedure in contracting the union; conjugal roles and domestic activities; and affinal relationships. The sphere of friendship includes affective and instrumental ties with non-kin, and patron-client relationships. Ritual and ceremonial action is seen in the processes of kinship and marriage, and local activities. It includes such practices as the sharing of the kola nut at gatherings of local people, and the ceremonial of the London wedding reception.

Social change is seen as the dynamic interaction of the two sets of variables, power relations (structural) and symbolic action. To study this interaction it is not necessary to examine the whole range of factors outlined above. Indeed,

1. This use of 'structural' is thus to be distinguished from the structural-functionalism of Radcliffe-Brown and the thought structuralism of Levi-Strauss.
2. E.R. Wolf (1966) p.11.

for practical reasons if for no other, it is desirable to limit the range of variables as far as possible to those which best reflect the pattern of change in a particular case and which from a practical point of view are most amenable to empirical investigation.

In this connection it is necessary to point out the special conditions of the research and the constraint they excercised on the choice of variables.

In the ideal situation, the method of analysis and fieldwork techniques adopted are those most suitable for the problem one is trying to investigate. In practice there is sometimes very little choice, given the conditions in which the research is to be conducted. In a particular case either quantitative or qualitative analysis might be appropriate, given the nature of the material and the problem for analysis. Conceptual analysis might play a more or less important part depending on the conceptual frameworks of informant and interviewer and the particular social context of the research. Similarly, statistical analysis is appropriate for some problems but requires certain conditions to be effective. Related to these alternative methods are various fieldwork techniques, again determined ideally by the problem. The use of questionnaires or depth interviews, documentary sources or participant observation, depends ideally on the type of information sought. To choose the technique or method of analysis in isolation from the problem would be to delimit the field of study in advance and hence predetermine the problem to be studied.

Unfortunately, however, the ideal research situation rarely exists. Practical considerations such as time, expense and physical resources, together with political and social conditions, may dictate the methods to be adopted and in so doing limit the kinds of problem which can be considered.

In the case of this particular research there were factors in the situation which not only predetermined the kind of fieldwork techniques to be used but limited the areas of social interaction which could be examined. These factors may be considered in turn.

It very soon became apparent that for a variety of reasons the Ibos were an elusive people with whom contact could not easily be made. No complete registers existed which would have allowed a random semple to be drawn. (The use of survey methods would in any case have been ruled out by the problem of administering questionnaires, a difficult task even with individuals to whom one was known or had been recommended, an impossible one with these to whom one was a complete stranger.)

Physical and social conditions of life in London were not conducive to the kind of social contacts and exposure to information which one might enjoy seated, for instance, in a village market place. Ibos lived scattered over the greater London area, and where local concentrations did exist, social relationships were not necessarily close-knit. Each individual's network extended in many directions, covering considerable physical and social distance. One was not aware of the whole range of an individual's acquaintances and could not, in any case, follow up independently such links as were apparent, for reasons given shortly. Although the impact of the physical environment was in itself sociologically significant it limited the kind of contact which could be made and the depth of involvement in particular networks.

The geographical spread of the Ibos inhibited spontaneity and introduced an element of formality contigent on the need for forward planning. Interviews had to be arranged in advance to avoid inconvenience and wasted journeys. This was not only for reasons of physical inaccessibility but was occasioned also by people's wide-ranging commitments which made time precious, and also by the need for formal introductions, a point related to the social and political conditions of the research.

There was, for instance, a widely-held view of English women which inclined people to regard the research as merely a pretext for some other activity, either political or promiscuous. This fact created a problem of role definition. It meant that, on the occasions when participant observation was possible, such as weddings and parties, it was difficult to take the initiative in making new acquaintances.

The event of the Nigeria-Biafra war had a predictable effect on people's reactions to the research. A general reluctance to answer questions, however innocuous, was heightened by post-war bitterness and suspicion, and fear of political recrimination. It was difficult to present oneself in the role of research student when that of a spy (for the Nigerian and British governments) was so readily ascribed. This factor limited the possibilities for effective participant observation, the range of questions one could ask, and the number of contacts one made.

It soon became apparent that only one way of obtaining useful contacts was possible. But this method - by personal introduction - limited the social range of individuals one met and hence the sort of problem one could investigate. Invariably, great care was taken by an informant to recommend only those individuals who, in his opinion, would understand the aim of the research and be cooperative. It soon became clear that such individuals had better than average education and tended to be of high social standing in the community.

The limitations imposed by this approach were obvious. Special care would be required in making statements referring to the Ibo community as a whole. This would be particularly true for aspects such as stratification, where the homogeneous character of the group covered by the research was sociologically significant. Whatever the area to be considered, it was evident that the conclusions drawn would be qualified by this factor of unrepresentativeness. It was therefore important to choose an area of social organisation in which the particular structural circumstances of the group, and the method of obtaining information from them, would not prove to much of a handicap.

After some time in the field it seemed that one area of interaction in particular met many of the conditions required. It united the areas of interest mentioned at the outset and in addition lacked any obvious political connotations. The institution of marriage became the focus of attention. Both practical and theoretical considerations operated in the choice of kinship and marriage as the object of study.

Marriage, in particular marital choice, provides an index of group solidarity and social distance. It reflects the existence and strength of social boundaries. In its major aspects - whom people marry, how they go about it, and the way they conduct their marital affairs, it reveals the main categories of action and identification. In situations of social change it indicates the changing configurations of interest. On a more fundamental level it reflects the conceptual ideals of man and woman, and hence introduces an issue of great topical interest: the status of women. Marriage is an aspect of the universal distinction between male and female categories; as such it provides a measure of the significance of gender as an organising principle in society.

Marriage and kinship combine other forms of symbolic action and are sensitive to changes in the structural sphere. Kinship, it became increasingly apparent, is of special significance in the social organisation of the Ibo community. Genealogy provides the structuring principle in the traditional society and the basis for organisation at the present time. Ideologies of marriage provide the main form of cultural differentiation for an ethnic minority group which is economically incorporated in the host society.

The dynamic interplay of kinship, marriage and power relations is traced in the following chapters. Having identified the major variables for analysis the task is now to delineate the historical periods in which their interplay is to be examined. The historical turning points in the community have been indicated in the account of its history and the pattern of interaction over the years. Further illumination is provided by an extended case study which pinpoints

the changes over time, as well as illustrating the interplay of power relations and symbolic action.[1]

Chima had travelled to Britain in 1959 to obtain academic qualifications of some kind. He was self-supporting, working as a packer during the day and attending evening classes to pass Advanced level examinations for university entrance. Life was difficult, and not the least of his problems was loneliness. Chima badly wanted female company and in 1962 wrote and asked his elder brother, the head of the family, to find him a wife. Some time elapsed before the elder brother replied, and his answer was that it was difficult. Another letter suggested that Chima should come home to find a wife for himself. His brother feared that if he sent a wife, Chima would stay in Britain, since he had everything he wanted there. The young man had no resources for a trip to Nigeria to look for a wife, and resigned himself to his fate.

Two years later he met and became involved with a Ghanaian girl. The liaison was not ideal and the girl had a child already but the couple felt sufficiently attached to start living together, a state of affairs which continued for some time. When hostilities broke out in Nigeria in 1966, Chima had just begun his university career. In this situation of change and uncertainty he needed emotional security and some idea of what he could look forward to. So he decided to marry the Ghanaian girl. He wrote to his brother to say that, since he had heard no more about a wife, he proposed to marry the girl he was living with. The response from his people was immediate and hostile. They opposed outright his marriage to a woman whom they did not know; who was not Ibo; who had been chosen by Chima himself without the traditional liaison between two families; and with whom he had been living. Theelder brother wrote back to say that the matter was closed, and as far as the family was concerned, Chima was unmarried.

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1. For a discussion of the extended case method, see Van Velsen (1967) and M. Gluckman (1967) p. 235.

As the war continued, Chima, like many others, suffered a deterioration in his finances. In addition to supporting himself, his wife, her child and their new baby, and financing his own full-time study, he was continually called upon to donate sums for the war effort. Regular levies were made by local unions, whose activities were coordinated by a central body - the Divisional Assembly - and the unions regularly undertook fundraising efforts for local projects of their own. Chima's wife, who was not Ibo, did not enter wholeheartedly into the spirit of the struggle, and felt the austerity demanded by the war irksome. Their failure to see eye to eye on financial matters undermined the relationship and in 1969 she left home, taking her own child with her and leaving the child of the marriage in his father's care.

Shortly afterwards Chima sought to obtain custody of the child and a legal separation from his wife, an action which shocked her into appealing for a reconciliation. She enlisted the help of his uncle who, as his senior relative in London, was responsible for settling Chima's marital disputes. The uncle stood by while the girl used his telephone, both trying to persuade Chima to drop the court action. But despite his relation's attempt to settle the matter and keep the couple together, the young man was unwilling to take his wife back. There were two reasons for his unwillingness. The first was his wife's failure to go directly to the uncle on leaving home, as an Ibo wife would have done. The implication was that she had gone instead to another man, which meant that as far as Chima was concerned the marriage was over. The second reason was perhaps more fundamental. It was the knowledge, which had always been at the back of his mind, that he could never have taken her home in the face of his family's opposition.

When the war ended he wrote home to say that his wife had left him. Again the response was immediate. The elder brother declared that this was the best news they had had since Chima left home, and preparations were under way to find him a wife. Another letter which arrived shortly after the first announced

the achievement of this goal: "We have found a good girl for you. She is beautiful. She comes from - village. Her father's name is -, her mother is -, from village -. She is twenty years old..."

Chima's reaction to this assistance, this time unsolicited, was mixed. On the one hand he was quite willing to accept a girl chosen by his family, although he was a university graduate. His last experience had not been a happy one. His family knew him well, and could choose someone who would suit him, someone from a family they knew and liked. A girl from a certain type of family is expected to behave in a particular way, and Chima knew that he could not do better himself from the Ibo girls in London, in that respect. On the other hand, his experiences in Britain had changed him. After all he had been through he did not think he could accept a girl chosen for him, on the basis of beauty, wealth, family background and education. He had to know that his wife had strength of character to cope with hardship when it arose, and was temperamentally suited to him. Despite his ambivalence, Chima entered into correspondence with the girl, exchanged photographs with her and allowed his brother to go ahead with preparations for a marriage.

Meanwhile,the ties of his first, unhappy marriage had to be dissolved. He was receiving reports from his friends and townspeople of liaisons between the girl and other Ibos, and was preparing a divorce case on grounds of adultery. The interest of his townspeople in the affair had been natural, after their initial distaste for the marriage. Initially their objections had been similar to those of Chima's family. But as the war proceeded and marriages to outsiders became more frequent and more acceptable, they bowed in the face of events which they, in any case, were powerless to prevent. Eventually, therefore, they welcomed Chima's wife as their own. After the separation, of which they were not aware, some of Chima's townspeople saw the girl at a party with another man. They said to themselves, 'This is one of our wives!' and informed Chima. Plans were made to cite the escort, another Ibo man, as correspondent.

Shortly afterwards, Chima received a telephone call from a friend of the man, asking him not to take a fellow Iboman to court, and this was followed up by a visit and a lengthy discussion. But Chima was determined to teach the man a lesson for having an affair with another Iboman's wife. Finally, several of the man's people persuaded a mutual friend of both to intercede on his behalf. Through the efforts of this mediator, a good friend of Chima's, the plan for the case was dropped. Chima agreed that, even if he had won the case, he would have come off badly. For his reputation in Ibo circles would have suffered considerably as a result of his taking another Iboman to court. In 1971 the divorce was obtained on grounds of desertion.

In 1962 Chima had taken the initiative in asking his brother to arrange a marriage for him. By 1972, despite his single state and difficult circumstances (he was bringing up the child of the marriage singlehanded) he had developed misgivings about the idea. The intervening years had seen a change in his circumstances which made the idea of an arranged marriage ideologically unacceptable. (In this Chima differed strikingly from many of his contemporaries, as will emerge in later chapters.) The pattern of events produced the opposite effect on his family, however, [1] In 1962 when Chima had wanted to marry, his brother refused to send a wife, for fear that he would not come home. By 1972 a 'proxy marriage'[2], as it is often called, was acceptable. In the earlier period, Chima's failure to return home on qualifying would have been a considerable economic loss to his family. The war years changed this situation fairly radically. The presence of a qualified wage earner in Britain was a positive asset to the family. It was no longer seen to be necessary for Chima to make the trip home to choose a wife for himself. To leave him in a single state would

1. As indicated at the outset, the action of Chima's brother in Nigeria is included on account of its direct influence on Chima's subsequent behaviour. His inclusion as an actor in the situation is justified by his proximity to Chima as a member of his role set. However, it must be pointed out that an interpretation of the brother's motives in terms of structural change contains an element of speculation.
2. Proxy marriages are dealt with in detail in Chapter 5.

have made him vulnerable again to women whose interest might not be those of the family. Thus a new form of marriage had become acceptable in consequence of changing economic circumstances.

It was the distance from home and his new economic independence, and the growing political uncertainties, which prompted Chima to embark on marriage without his family's consent. Again, structural pressures in the period of the war undermined the marriage and brought about its eventual dissolution. But the break was facilitated by kinship pressures; his family's initial reaction, their delight when the news came that she had left him, and Chima's knowledge that he could never have taken his wife home. The family sacrifices which had been made to finance his early education and journey to Britain, and the joint efforts of the brothers in restoring the family fortune after the war, made a rupture of relations inconceivable. It was this interdependence which eventually made the idea of an arranged marriage acceptable to Chima, despite his years of physical separation, intellectual and emotional development, and economic self-sufficiency.

The reaction of his uncle and his townspeople to the first marriage and to its breakdown - initial hostility, gradual acceptance and later an attempt to reconcile the pair - again reflected the circumstances of life in Britain after 1966. Changing attitudes towards outsiders, whether Ibos or non-Ibos, reflected the general upheavals and increased interaction of the war period. The need for economic and emotional security was reflected in the changing basis of marital choice. Adherence to customary requirements - the interest of the extended family - were no longer of paramount importance; or rather, those interests were redefined.

If internal cleavages and loyalties in the Ibo community declined in significance, the boundary between Ibos and outsiders was clearly marked. A code of conduct between Ibos expressed and sustained their solidarity. The men observed

a code of behaviour with regard to each other's wives. The unwitting breach of this rule by his wife's escort at the party was Chima's reason for involving him in the divorce proceedings. But an appeal on the same grounds of Ibo solidarity was successful in persuading him to drop the idea of prosecution. However justified his case against the man might be, Chima would have been violating an even more important code in taking a fellow Iboman to an English court, and exposing their internal differences to outsiders.

Although this case is of considerable value analytically, it does not, of course, manifest the whole range of factors in the situation of the Ibos; nor indeed could any real-life incident. Chima's experience was different from that of many other Ibos, as were his family background and the circumstances of his arrival in Britain. The experiences of the people who came after him, for instance, were shaped by their legal status under the 1962 Immigration Act.

However, the case shows the interaction through time of economic and kinship processes. It indicates changing patterns of marriage and friendship in response to economic and political pressures. It suggests certain time periods in which the interplay of variables is marked: the years between Chima's arrival in the 1950s and 1966, when hostilities broke out in Nigeria; the period of the Nigeria-Biafra war, 1967-9; and the post-war years of 1970-2.

In the remainder of the thesis the process of interaction is considered in three stages, corresponding to these three historical periods. In each period relationships are considered as a separate, self-contained system, though it may be necessary to refer forwards or backwards from time to time.

The first extends from 1944 to 1966. It encompasses the years following World War II when Nigeria is a colonial dependency whose people regard Britain as the mother country. Free entry is exploited in the desire, and need, for academic and professional qualifications. Migrants come as workers and students,

most of them male and single. The students enjoy a spirit of 'comraderie' under the auspices of the British Council. In 1960 the event of Nigerian independence speeds up the flow and widens the social and intellectual range of students. The 1962 Immigration Act counteracts this trend by restricting the range of permitted entrants to full-time students only. The legal status of the new arrivals has economic implications, and marriage becomes an important means of security. The community consists towards the end of the period of students and their wives, most of them in their twenties. This period is dealt with in the first chapter.

The second period commences with the outbreak of hostilities in 1966. Biafran secession a year later brings financial hardship and political and legal insecurity. Internal relationships are intensified and the boundary between Biafrans and outsiders more firmly drawn. Local associations proliferate for a variety of purposes. So do organisations which cut across the lines of kinship and locality. New marriages show the same tendency to cross old boundaries, and old marriages which no longer satisfy new conditions come under pressure. This period is covered by the second chapter.

The final post-war period sees a reversal of many of these trends. The pre-war generation of students has become a generation of employees with new status symbols and a new way of life. They have become voluntary exiles, sailing a stormy path between Scylla and Charybdis: the uncertainties and heavy obligations of life in Nigeria, and the political, social and emotional difficulties of settlement in Britain. Longstanding marriages collapse under the strain of these new circumstances. While some war-time friendships flourish, some war-time marriages die and others come under pressure. New marriages are made according to old criteria, with wives being sent from home to unknown husbands. Other unions reflect the economic and psychological independence acquired in recent years. In most new marriages, however, attention is paid to the customary requirements which demand the participation of kin.

At the present time the Ibos are immersed in the economic activities of the metropolis, though new forms of economic activity are conceived in an Ibo idiom. Despite this they are, in appearance at least, adjusting rapidly to life in the suburbs. But the political realities of the situation prompt the constant renewal of internal links, and in the symbolic spheres of kinship, marriage and friendship the Ibos are seen to be an interacting and cohesive unit.

The social organisation of the Ibo community after the collapse of Biafra is analysed in Chapters three to six. Chapter three is given to the decline in formal organisations and the growth of individual autonomy in the economic sphere. In Chapter four the dissolution of community ties is placed in perspective with an examination of informal organisation and the persistence of kinship as a category of identification and action. Chapters five and six deal with marriage and its role in maintaining the strength and distinctiveness of the group. Chapter 5 deals with existing marriages: the conduct of marital affairs, marital st bility and the pattern of dispute settlement. Chapter 6 concentrates on patterns of courtship and the procedure in establishing new marriages. In conclusion the interaction of economic, political and kinship variables in the different periods is drawn together, with speculations about the future of the Ibo community in London.

CHAPTER ONE.

The Pre-war Period, 1944 - 1966.

Introduction. The roots of the existing community lie in a process of migration which began in the 1930s and gathered momentum in the '40s and '5os, reaching a peak in the early 1960s. Several categories of migrant were involved: ex-seamen, who became domiciled in English ports; registered students; and stow-aways or would-be students who lacked the resources for transportation. In the early stages the ex-seamen and stowaways were predominant. The later decades saw an influx of registered students, and by the early '6os the migration of seamen and stowaways had ceased.

The migrants are generally treated in the literature as two broad categories, workers and students. But an overlap occurs in respect of the stowaways, many of whom shared the aspirations and outlook of the officially registered students, and eventually became part of the growing student community.

The present chapter examines the different experiences of these groups, in interaction with English and other white people, with other black minorities, and with each other. By way of an introduction it is helpful to consider the circumstances of the early Ibo residents, their mode of arrival, social back-grounds and demographic composition, their expectations of life in Britain and degree of preparedness for what they actually found.

Among the earliest arrivals in Britain were men who came to find work, either as ex-seamen or stowaways. There had been Ibos in London before them, like the slave Equiano who was imported in the middle of the eighteenth century.[1] and the medical student with Ibo origins, J. Africanus Horton, who arrived a hundred years later. But such isolated cases do not, it appears, account for the for-mation of the existing community.

1. M. Banton (1953) p. 2, points out that there had been a small negro population in the country from the middle of the seventeenth century. By the 1760s the number of coloured slaves was thought to have reached at least 14,000, before a judgement in 1772 led to a curtailment of their importation. A considerable number of the 14,000 were, presumably, Ibos.

To judge from the early literature on West Africans in Britain, from the composition of the existing community of Ibos and the accounts of its origins by informants, it would seem that the earliest migrants to establish themselves as a group were the ex-seamen and stowaways, who arrived around the time of the second World War.

There are no records of the number of Ibos entering or leaving the U.K. during the period in question, or of West Africans as a whole. Estimates put the number of West African immigrants in Britain, excluding registered students, at 2,500 between 1939 and 1951.[1] Of these, only a small proportion, probably, were Ibos. A large proportion of the West African Seamen were of the Kru tribe, and others signed on in Lagos and Port Harcourt, the latter drawn largely from the Ijaw tribe who inhabit the Niger Delta. Ibo seamen, such as they were, probably formed part of the remainder of the Port Harcourt contingent, Port Harcourt being the nearest coastal town to the predominantly inland Ibo area. The number of Ibo stowaways is even harder to ascertain. A total of 551 stowaways from Nigeria were landed between 1946 and 1951[2], of which perhaps a third were Ibo. According to informants the Ibo stowaways were few, for as inland people they lacked the knowledge and contacts in the coastal towns necessary to get aboard a vessel bound for Britain, and avoid detection. A stowaway needed to know men who could introduce him to someone who could put him in a good hiding place, often a member of the ship's crew who had to be bribed for his services. It is probable that most of the older Ibo residents who arrived soon after the 1939-44 war to work or combine work with study fall into this category. It seems reasonable to assume that some of the older students, too, arrived in this way. The circumstances of their arrival are now concealed for reasons of pride, the reluctance to admit that one was unable, through poverty or illiteracy, to travel as a registered student. A further reason for concealing such

1. M. Banton (1953) p. 3. In the absence of detailed information on this aspect of Ibo migration it has been necessary to draw extensively on Banton's article, which deals with West Africans in general.

2. Ibid p. 6.

a situation is that, although they felt morally justified in acting as they did, stowaways were technically committing an offence. The number of probable stowaways encountered in the course of fieldwork is small, but as forerunners of the present community, and as parttime students and workers who interacted in varying degrees with the registered students, the category of stowaway deserves to be included in the analysis.

Fewer ex-seamen were encountered in the field and, as later sections will show, their expectations and mode of adjustment to life in Britain were not conducive to close association with the students who followed them. The attraction of the seamen to Britain was founded on direct knowledge of life in the imperial country. They were familiar with the incomes and standards of living of their English counterparts, and with life in English ports. Often they deserted West African vessels in order to sign on at the more favourable rates of pay current in British ports. Sometimes their contract of employment was terminated in a U.K. port, and they were given the option of repatriation or discharge there. Having taken a room ashore and perhaps formed a liaison with a woman, the seamen would take shore work and settle down to life in the new country. According to Banton, several hundreds of West African seamen settled in English dockland areas in this way. An informant in London makes the point that older Ibo residents in the Liverpool and Manchester areas are ex-seamen, and some were encountered on a brief field trip to the former city. It is not clear whether such dockland settlements grew up in London during the 1939-50 period, but it seems unlikely.[1]

1. S. Patterson (1963) p. 30, mentions large settlements of Indian, Pakistani and West Africans in Stepney and Southall. She does not, unfortunately, give more detail than this. But it seems reasonable to assume that since the Southall immigrant population is composed of Asians, the West Africans are domiciled in Stepney. In view of the ignorance of informants about the likelihood of Ibo ex-seamen in East London, it would seem that the Stepney community consists of Yoruba and other West Africans rather than Ibos.

The stowaways were on the whole younger than the seamen, the majority being in their early 20s.[1] Data given about 123 West African stowaways landed in 1950 give their ages as:

Over 30	4
26 - 30	24
21 - 25	60
under 21	33

They are distinguished also by their different expectations of Britain, and unpreparedness for life there. Whereas seamen migrants merely disembarked to settle in a country of which they already had some experience, the stowaways came to see for themselves the marvels which had been described to them by seamen and European expatriates. Economic and political factors prompted their migration to Britain. They were attracted on the one hand by the possibility of an improved standard of living, and on the other by identification with Britain as the 'mother country'.

The number of stowaways increased dramatically in the years immediately after the war of 1939-45. During the war greater numbers of West African seamen had visited British ports, and British troops were stationed in West Africa. Colonial subjects were more actively identified with Britain in her fight against the Axis powers. What they heard then about high wages and standards of living in Britain, coupled with their emotional predisposition as colonial subjects towards the 'mother country', induced younger West Africans to consider migration. Assumptions about the opportunities for advancement in Britain had been fostered by instruction in schools, and by the rapid success of returned students, whose qualifications enchanced their prestige, marriage prospects and chances for leadership. Both Azikiwe and Nkrumah, the nationalist leaders, are known to have first left their countries by stowing away.

Many of the stowaways, therefore, were young, literate and ambitious men who came to Britain with the intention of studying and becoming doctors and lawyers, and returning to become leaders of their people. Some of them did

1. Banton (1953) p. 6. Other details are given by Patterson 1963 b. in Appendix

indeed become assiduous students at evening classes run by local authorities. Others, however, were overcome by the hardships they encountered and the lack of opportunity for educating themselves, and drifted into activities which gave them a highly disreputable image in official eyes.[1]

The expectations of life in Britain held by seamen and workers, and would-be students, were similar in one respect. Both groups regarded it as their right to travel to the imperial country and be accepted as the equals of the people there. The young stowaways had perhaps a more distorted impression of Britain than had the seamen, whose tales they listened to with avid curiosity. According to Banton, some would-be migrants were impressed by tales of streets paved with gold; of the part of London called 'Angel' where angels lived; of employers who begged seamen to leave their ships and work ashore; and of girls who came forward with a smile at the least invitation. More important, probably, was the common assumption that 'in England, education was available to everyone, almost without exception, to a university level; that the government controlled everything; it finds you a good job and helps to maintain you...'[2] On account of the political relationship between Britain and Nigeria, migrants had been conditioned to accept many British values before they entered the country, and as British citizens they expected social equality. They did not enter Britain thinking of it as an alien land in which they must stand together. Some expected to be treated with the respect and favour that the British were accorded in the colonies.

These,then, were the circumstances and expectations of one section of Ibo residents in the early stages of migration of the U.K. The seamen and stowaways arrived in the years following the second world war, drawn to Britain by the

1. Some official, apparently, believed that stowaways were the dregs of their own countries. Banton suggests (p.7) that on the contrary they included some of the most enterprising and ambitious young men. On the less reputable activities of some 'unsuccessful' migrants, see 'City of Spades' by Colin MacInnes, and interesting account of the London underworld of West African migrants. According to Professor J. Middleton, there were Ibos involved in this type of activity in London in the early 1960s, However, none who made a living in this way (as opposed to occasional illicit gains) were encountered in the field.

2. K. Little, quoted in Banton (1953) p. 4.

attraction which an imperial country has for colonial subjects. They were comparatively few in number, perhaps a few hundred in all, and their arrival was finally curtailed by immigration legislation in 1962, which brought the period of unrestricted entry to an end.

The students, for their part, came in different circumstances and with other extectations of life in Britain.[1] Those who arrived after Nigerian Independence in 1960, in particular, tneded to regard entry as less of a right. They had furthermore been forwarned by older Western-trained relatives about the social attitudes they would encounter.

Ibos began to arrive as students in the 1930s. Among the first were the son of a prominent chief, who became the first Ibo judge, and his servant who became the first Ibo doctor. The offspring of both are members of the existing community. So,too, is an elderly woman who first travelled overseas in 1932, to become a nun. Judging from the list of founder members of the West African Students' Union (WASU), formed in 1927[2], there were no Ibos in Britain at that time, and it seems unlikely that any arrived before, owing to the relatively late penetration of Iboland by European colonialists and missionaries. But soon the rising tide of nationalism in colonial countries in the post-war period led to an influx of students, aided and controlled by British government policy. Since 1944 the policy had been to further the political, social and economic development of the colonies for eventual self-government. Opportunities were created to train in Britain for professional and technical posts, and education was expanded in the colonies with the establishment of institutions such as University College in Nigeria. The existence of scholarships for study abroad gave added incentive to students who recognised the potential value of higher education in the new nation states. Accordingly, the numbers increased rapidly.

1. In the absence of contemporary evidence the situation of Ibo students in the period preceding Independence and the 1967 war must be inferred from the recollections of the few who still remain in London, and from the literature on West African students in general.

2. P. Garigue (1953) p. 57.

Registered colonial students in Britain rose from 1188 in 1945 to 5,154 in 1951, a four-fold increase in six years.[1] Towards the end of the decade the rate of increase was still spectacular. In 1959 the number of Nigerian freshers at London University was 750, approximately. In the following year the intake exceeded one thousand.[2]

The granting of independence to Nigeria's two southern regions in 1957, followed by national independence in 1960, affected the number and composition of students arriving in Britain. It affected also their attitudes towards the country and the people among whom they were coming to live; their purpose in coming, and their expectations of life here. The granting of political independence was accompanied by changes in the legal status of former colonial subjects. These changes were embodied in the Immigration Act of 1962, which produced further changes in outlook among new arrivals. Thus in describing the circumstances and expectations of the pre-war community a distinction may be drawn between the arrivals of the 1940s and 50s, and the post-Independence generation of students.

In the session of 1951-2 there were in all 642 registered Nigerian students in London, four-fifths of them male.[3] Of these, perhaps a third were Ibo. They fell into two categories; sponsored and unsponsored. The sponsored students included holders of government and other awards and scholarships, and private students recommended by an official body in Nigeria after giving proof of adequate financial resources. The unsponsored students were those who arrived without such guarantees and were officially unrecognised. They differed from the stowaways only in possessing the fare for the journey to Britain. Some tried to get recognition on arrival by an official body such as the British Council, for the advantages this conferred in gaining entry into a university

1. A.T. Carey (1956) p. 29.
2. West Africa. Sept. 1959, Sept. 1960. Most were external students (ie. studying full- or part-time at local colleges) and most were studying law or economics.
3. Carey (1956) p. 31.

or college, and finding accommodation. Estimates of the numbers of unsponsored colonial students in the early 1950s vary. The Colonial Office estimated that they were a tenth of the total; the British Council maintained that more than a third of the students met at the ports in 1950 fell into this category. The migration of unsponsored students ended with the 1962 Immigration Act which restricted entry to clearly defined categories of worker, student and dependent. The distribution of Ibo students between the two categories is not known. It is likely, however, that a considerable proportion of arrivals during the 1950s were unsponsored, and that this accounts for some who came before 1959 and are still here (8%). With the approach of Independence the number of sponsored students increased, though the migration of men still exceeded by far that of women. The most popular subjects were still law, but the proportion pursuing practical and professional courses increased with the need for personnel to man the administrative, educational and industrial institutions of the new state.

Their expectations were much like those of the stowaways, though they were to some extent better prepared for life in Britain, and were more ambivalent in their attitudes towards the 'mother country'. Their expectations were high. They saw in education in Britain means of sharing in the ruler's prestige. At the same time the rising tide of nationalism in colonial countries in the 1950s made them resentful of colonial status. The students in the fifties expected, however, to meet English people, to make friends and to participate in the social and cultural life of the host society.

They were to some extent prepared for the situation they encountered, for as students they had the benefit of British Council information and advice.[1] This organisation issued leaflets in the countries of origin for the help of students, containing advice about money and baggage, procedure on embarkation,

1. Details of the British Council's early activity is contained in A.T. Carey's study. (1956) p. 44-5. This information is substantiated by discussions with British Council officials in London in 1971.

arrangements for housing, and suitable clothing. In 1952 it started to give lectures on these matters in the country of origin. It endeavoured to meet students on arrival in British ports and to give practical advice on transport and currency. It made special arrangements to deal with the Autumn influx, to the extent of fixing up temporary accommodation. An Introduction Course was also available for the new arrivals. It consisted of lectures and discussions on such matters as London Transport, laundry and gasmeters, eating facilities and libraries.

There was, however, no mention of the colour bar, or of relationships between men and women, gaps which gave rise to complaints later. In other ways, too, the students were unprepared for the conditions they found. The way of life of British expatriates led them to expect better conditions in Britain. An Ibo informant tells of his surprise on seeing a street of pre-1939 terraced houses in East London. He recalls that he asked his companion when they were to be demolished, thinking that this event must be imminent and the houses replaced by the large, detached residences which he had thought were the homes of all Englishmen!! Other sources, too, record the student's surprise at seeing dirty streets and people doing manual jobs.[1] In the latter respect, an informant recalls his embarrassment on finding lifts in department stores operated by elderly men. He addressed them as 'sir' in acknowledgement of their seniority.

The post-Independence generation of students were better prepared. Many of them benefited from the advice of older brothers and relations who had been to Britain before them. They were, in addition, less ambivalent towards the host society, since the colonial relationship no longer existed. They came as commonwealth citizens for the purpose of acquiring specific qualifications to promote their chances in Nigeria. The old ambition of travel to the imperial capital to share the social and cultural life of the ruling group had given way to a narrower objective. A parallel development was the growing preference

1. A.T. Carey. (1956) p. 40.

for specific, technical and professional courses over such subjects as Law which provided, or were thought to provide, a more liberal education.[1] The all-rounders of the 1950s were being replaced in the 1960s by a generation of technocrats.

This distinction is made by members of the earlier generation who hark back to the 'good old days' of the 1950s. The older students compare themselves favourably with those who came after them. They recall the spirit of adventure and broader horizons of the earlier times; the desire to mix with the English and share their cultural life ('How many of these technocrats go to Prom concerts as we did?'). They maintain also that 'there were fewer of us then; everyone knew everyone else; there was no colour prejudice....' This self-image suggests that the pattern of interaction between Ibos and non-Ibos, and among the Ibos themselves, underwent a significant change in the course of two decades.

Several questions are prompted by the self-image of the older generation of students. One wants to know whether the pattern of interaction really changed between the 1950s and 1960s, and if it did, why. If it did not, the question arises as to why the older residents maintain this image of themselves in relation to the rest of the community? An answer to these questions may be found in an examination of social interaction, which occupies the remainder of the chapter.

The analysis is undertaken in three parts. In the first, relationships between Ibos and white members of the host society, both English and European, are considered. The second deals with relationships between Ibos and other black minority groups, such as Yorubas, Ghanaians, West Indians and Asians. Finally the pattern of interaction among the various categories of Ibo migrant is examined.

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1. A.T. Carey also describes the disappointment of early colonial students who had chosen to study law because they thought it would provide a general education but found it to be too narrow and technical. For the trends in courses taken by Ibos see the General Introduction, p.33

Interaction with Whites. Most of the migrants entertained the hope of being accepted on equal terms by Londoners, and of learning something about their way of life through interaction with them. The different groups - workers, sponsored and unsponsored students - varied in their experiences but had in common a sense of disappointment and frustration at the kind of social contact achieved.

The first, and for many Ibos the only, relationships with white people were formal and impersonal. They arose in the context of work and study, housing and organised leisure activities. They concerned landladies and hostel wardens, colleagues and college lectureres, and official of religious, welfare and student associations like the British Council and Church Missionary Society. Informal relationships, where they existed at all, were generally heterosexual, and involved either foreign girls temporarily resident in Britain, or working class English women.

For most of the registered students, and for some of the unregistered, the first contact was made on arrival when they were met by a representative of a welfare organisation. The British Council, designated by the Colonial Office as its agent for the provision of welfare services in 1950, played a major part in the reception of overseas students in the following decade. By the 1960s, according to an official in the Hospitality Section, people had their own contacts in London and fewer asked to be met at the station. Some unsponsored students were also met in this way if there happened to be an official around when they arrived, though they received little help subsequently.

Sponsored students were assisted in their search for accommodation, either by being given a bed at a hostel, or being placed at a recommended private address. The unsponsored students were told how to find their own accommodation, a difficult task if they knew noone here already. Unlike the seamen, who were easily absorbed by boarding houses in dockland areas,[1] the stowaways and

1. Banton, (1953) p. 5.

unsponsored students encountered prejudice and hostility. In A.T. Carey's sample of landladies, only 10% were prepared to take negro tenants. The position was not much easier for some of the sponsored students who had failed to obtain one of the few hostel places (there were 230 beds in British Council hostels, about 600 for colonials at London University halls of residence, and some small private hostels), and did not wish to live with British Council landladies. Only 40% of the latter were prepared to accept negroes in any case, and over half of the addresses were more than seven miles from Westminster.[1] Rather than live so far from the centre of the city, therefore, many students preferred to find their own accommodation. Colour prejudice and a 'colour tax' (higher rents for coloured people) seem to have been almost universal experiences for West Africans looking for accommodation in the 1950s.[2] The problem was reduced for those who were connected with house owners. Although the trend towards house ownership among the Ibos is largely a post-war phenomenon, some bought property in the early 1960s and even in the fifties, and let rooms to fellow Ibos and other West Africans. Thus an Ibo who came to study early in the decade purchased a house in East London in 1954, where he was joined shortly afterwards by a younger sister and two younger brothers. (The house is still occupied by the sister and a brother, together with a cousin and other Ibo tenants). This feature of social organisation will be discussed further in the context of relations within the group and with other black minorities. The point to be made here is that the majority of Ibos experienced some difficulty in the search for accommodation and that, having found it, relationships with landladies were impersonal and contractual. They were characterised by mutual reserve. A few landladies became mother-substitutes but they were an exception. An informant recalls his loneliness with a British Council landlady in Ealing in

1. Carey (1956) p. 72-6.

2. In a set of essays collected by H. Tajfel and J.L. Dawson (1965), the Ibo entry Chapter 6 'The paternal posture' pp 75-86 contains a bitter attack on discrimination in housing, in employment and in interpersonal relations in general. See also Eyo Ndem (1957) on the status of coloured people in Britain in the 50s.

the late 1950s. He finally sent for his young wife to join him, although his original intention had been to finish his course and return to her.

Relations established with hostel wardens, by those fortunate enough to secure hostel places, were, if more friendly, no less superficial. Formality was imposed by the infrequency of contact and authoritative role of the warden, as director of a large and complex organisation, as some of the international student hostels were.[1] College tutors, like wardens, were encountered in their official capacity. They were placed in the category of authoritative members of the older generation with whom intimacy was inappropriate. College lecturers and university professors, in particular, had the role of 'father in England' ascribed to them and were treated with the respect and deference due to an Ibo father.[2] Relations with other college officials, such as welfare officers, were no more intimate.[3]

The absence of community life in most of the London colleges made informal contact with English people more difficult. West African students encountered less prejudice among their fellow students than among the population in general, on account of their common backgrounds and ages. But difficulties were encountered when heterosexual contact was attempted. English male students did not approve of their girls associating with coloured students and the girls themselves were unwilling to risk their reputations in doing so.[4] Colonial students at smaller colleges in the suburbs were better able to make contact with English students, and visited the homes of those who lived locally. The students of the larger central colleges, and at the University of London in particular, lacked this advantage.

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1. The British Council hostel at Hans Crescent, for instance, served also as a social and cultural centre for non-residents. A similar role is played by International Students' House, a large, well-endowed hostel and club established in the early 1960s.

2. Interviews with a Professor of Law at London University and a law lecturer at Holborn College of Law and Commerce (now the Polytechnic of Central London) produced similar evidence. The professor had once been disconcerted by a solemn announcement from one of his Ibo students that the latter's marriage had been consummated, three weeks after the arrival of his new wife from Nigeria. An Ibo doctoral condidate, formerly a university lecturer in Nigeria, suggests that the deferential attitude towards academic staff is fostered

(Cont'd p.77)

For the full-time sponsored students, contact with Londoners was facilitated by the British Council and other associations. In the 1950s the Methodist Missionary Society, Church Missionary Society's Overseas Visitor's Department, Friend's International Centre, Student's Movement House, Toc H, East and West Friendship Council, and World University Service, were among the organisations which endeavoured to establish contact between colonial students and the English. In the early sixties the number of such organisations grew to contain the increasing number of students arriving from overseas. They included International Students' House, and the Overseas Students' Commendation Centre of the Church Missionary Society. Among the services offered were educational visits to places of interest, and informal visits to English homes for those students who wished to sample English family life.[1] Few students, however, availed themselves of this opportunity. Less than a third of the offers of hospitality by the Rotary Clubs and church organisations to the British Council were taken up.[2] In the first place the social contact made on such occasions was unsatisfactory. The students complained that they met few 'ordinary' British people, but well-intentioned cranks, and patronising liberal intellectuals, who were ignorant of the situation in their countries, and of the needs of the students themselves. Visits to families rarely turned out to be the 'informal' encounters everyone hoped for.

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2. (Cont'd). by the method of instruction in Nigerian schools and colleges. The didactic style of teaching and clearly defined authority structure are congruent with authority patterns in the wider society, in particular with family relationships. The lack of intimacy between college staff and colonial students is commented upon also by Carey, (1956) p. 105.

3. A social worker at a London college with a considerable number of overseas Law students states that she is consulted on practical issues like jobs and child fostering, but is rarely asked to help with problems of interpersonal relations.

4. Carey (1956) p. 106.

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1. The Overseas Students Commendation Centre, established in 1964, offers the following services: Introduction to a church; international monthly supper club; monthly encounter groups; holiday hospitality etc.

2. A.T. Carey (1956), p. 119. Similar evidence of Ibo 'self-sufficiency' is given by the Director of the Overseas Students Commendation Centre.

Another reason for the failure to take advantage of British Council facilities was the suspicion that it was acting not altogether in the interests of the students. Suspicion of the British Council as an 'agent of imperialist propaganda' rested partly on its official relationship with the Colonial Office. But some of its more harmless activities were seen in retrospect as being highly suspicious. An Ibo informant refers to 'organised attempts to investigate and control entrants'to this country. At his own reception in Liverpool in 1963 he gave his personal details (age, name, purpose, destination) to 'at least four people claiming to represent different organisations'. A man who was speaking Ibo claimed that he had been at Enugu. The student's friend who was going direct to London and had nowhere to stay, was given a badge to wear by a British Council representative who said that he would be recognised at Waterloo Station and helped. 'But', the student recalls darkly, 'there was no-one there.' He concluded that there were immigration spies at major points of entry, working under the auspices of the British Council, and that the latter was a highly dubious organisation.[1]

Religious organisations like the Y.M.C.A. and church societies, while free from all this type of suspicion, did not meet the need of the students for informal contact with local residents. The cause was often the disillusionment of the individual with the style of worship and way of life of the congregation, which led to a gradual slackening of interest. A fervent Catholic who had attended a small local church regularly since his arrival in Britain in 1963 at first enjoyed the student sessions after the service, and the meetings with English members of the congregation. But after attending the cathedral in the centre of the city when he moved to the nearby Y.M.C.A., he was appalled by the 'social

1. It is not clear whether this suspicion was present at the time or developed subsequently. The welfare officer of a London college noted a tendency for Ibo students to become suspicious to the point of paranoia during the war and afterwards. It is possible that in this case too the 1962 experience seemed odd in retrospect. However, J. Eldridge (1960) discovered among overseas students a pronounced mistrust of the British Council, and belief in its activities of spying and propaganda for the British Government. The same tendencies are noted in the early 1950s, by A.T. Carey.

aspects of religion', the ostentatious donations and purse rattling. Eventually he gave up attending. Another student finally lost interest when the priest 'talked rubbish'. He had assured his congregation that the missionaries of a particular order had often died in Africa because of the hardships they had had to endure. The Ibo student, as it happened, had attended one of their mission schools and the missionaries had, he said, 'lived like lords'. For many students, however, the loss of interest seems to have been precipitated by the lack of warmth encountered in the congregation, sometimes expressed in acts of discrimination.

The social contacts afforded by religious activity, and college life, by housing arrangements and by organised leisure activities, were mostly formal and impersonal in nature. The students interacted with Londoners acting in official or semi-official capacities, and interaction remained at this superficial level. Few contacts of an intimate or non-contractual kind were established by these means. Often, however, it was contact of the latter kind which was most eagerly sought. In particular, the students were anxious for friendships with members of the opposite sex.

Few opportunities existed for intimate heterosexual relationships within the group for a variety of reasons. The main one was demographic: male students far outnumbered female, in the 1950s particularly. Exact proportions of Ibo men and women in London during the early period are not known, but from a variety of evidence it would seem that the ratio was in the region of six to one[1] in the latter part of the 1950s, and the disparity even greater before that.

1. This ratio is reached by combining the estimated for full-time (sponsored) and unsponsored students and the sex distribution of early arrivals in the present community. Thus there were in 1951-2 131 Nigerian women out of a total of 642 sponsored students. Unsponsored students probably included a far smaller proportion of women, if there were any at all. (In fact, there is evidence of the occasional female stowaway. Banton p. 8). Statistics gathered in respect of the Ibo community in 1971 suggest that while in the period before 1959 women were less than a third of the new arrivals, by the period 1964-7 they made up half of the total. See General Introduction.

Although the number of women sent to acquire technical and professional qualifications (as nurses and secretaries, mainly) increased as Independence approached, they did not at any time receive the same opportunity as the men for study abroad. Generally the daughters of wealthy families were sought in marriage by men returning from overseas with the coveted qualifications, and were married before they could be 'spoilt' by western education. Single girls who did make the journey were often inaccessible to the men students, for a variety of reasons. They might have been 'promised' to someone in Nigeria who was financing their education. Some were affected by social stigma which made any but the most casual relationship undesirable. Another factor was the likelyhood that such relationships would be misinterpreted by fellow students and by families at home who would be certain to hear of them. These and other reasons limited the opportunity for heterosexual relationships within the group, and increased the need of the men students for informal interactions with women in the host society.

Not all the young men sought such contacts, however, Frequently they had wives or fiancees at home. Almost invariably the husbands came alone to study, expecting a separation of four or five years. When there were no children because the marriage had not been consummated a wife was sent to join her husband about a year before the completion of his course so that she could'do some little course or other', and share his experience of being abroad. After 1960 this pattern became well-established, as the idea of education for women gained ground and the economic advantages it conferred became obvious. Girls followed their fiancees after they had finished secondary school, normally one or two years after the engagement and his departure for Britain. Another factor in its development was the need for the husband to be a full-time student, to comply with the 1962 Immigration Act. His wife, entering as a dependent, could work to support him, while pursuing her own course part-time.

In the 1950s, however, the sexual imbalance was more pronounced, and the need for informal, emotionally satisfying relationships with members of the opposite sex particularly acute. The problems encountered by African students in the area of heterosexual relationships are well-known. Much had been written, too, about relationships between black men and white women in the working class areas of immigrant settlement. Documentary evidence for the 1950s is supported by the recollections of long-established Ibo residents and may be used to illustrate the Ibo situation in the period in question.

Attempts were made to contact women in a variety of places, dance halls and certain social clubs being the most popular. Informants recall with wry amusement their efforts at the Hammersmith Palais to obtain dancing partners. Polite refusals were invariably the rule. Two friends describe their starting at the same point, moving in opposite directions around the edge of the dance floor, and meeting again at the other side having failed to persuade any girl to leave her seat! This reluctance to associate with them came as a rude shock to most of the young men, who were regarded as highly eligible at home, and had never been refused dances before.

Some relationships were established with fellow students, but, as was suggested earlier, female students were not often willing to be associated with black students in the eyes of their white class mates. On the whole the students failed to make more than superficial contact with white women of their own background and education. A common complaint was that they could get English girls to go out with them but that these girls were of a lower social status than they were. They were either uneducated or were too old or too plain to find English men.[1]

There is evidence of a considerable number of intermarriages in the early period. No figures are available, and most of the couples concerned probably left Britain for Nigeria before the outbreak of hostilities in 1966.

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1. Kanitkar (1970) p. 80 produced similar evidence for Indian students in the London area.

That marriage between Ibomen and English women was not a rare phenomenon in the 1950s and early 60s is evident from the accounts of informants; from the number of 'British Biafran' wives who fled from Nigeria in the recent war; from the apparently widely diffused image of such women in Iboland ('east end' or 'fish and chips' ie. lower class women), an image with which young men came armed to Britain; and the existence of long-standing intermarriages in London at the present time.

From the evidence it is difficult to pronounce on the social origins of the English women involved in intermarriages. The widespread impression among Ibos that they are working class is contradicted by the middle class backgrounds of the 'British-Biafran' wives. The few long-standing intermarriages encountered in the field include both highly educated, middle-class women and uneducated, working-class women. It is likely, however, that the latter acoount for a high proportion of marriages between the workers and unsponsored students who hoped to study part-time while engaging in paid employment by day, and working class English women in the areas where they became domiciled. Certainly, interracial marriages between seamen and local women were of this sort. In a study of a West African and West Indian community on Tyneside in 1951, between 80% and 90% of the wives were found to be white and mostly lower class. The remaining 10% were the second generation offspring of mixed marriages.[1] The women had in many cases offered personal friendship and help as the seamen's landladies and first contacts on arrival. Others were met in local pubs and dance halls, or at the homes of kin and friends. A major factor in the association was found to be the extremely low status of the women in the white community, either on account of illegitimate births or prostitution, which had forced them to turn elsewhere for physical and emotional security.

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1. Collins S. (1951) p. 797.

The tendency for liaisons in the working class immigrant communities to take on a permanent or semi-permanent aspect (whether or not they resulted in legal marriages) is a reflection of the particular circumstances and expectations of the ex-seamen and workers. Before comparing their attitudes towards liaisons and marriage with white women, with the attitudes of the students, something must be said about another category of white women, with whom the Ibos interacted and intermarried.

While in a sense girls from the continent of Europe were part of the host community to the Ibos they were also, like them, temporary residents in an alien society. Like the colonial students they had come to work and study, and experience life in Britain, Equally, they came from 'respectable' families, and travelling abroad was regarded as a stage in their education. On account perhaps of their marginal position in English society, their distance from home and the constraining influence of family and friends, they tended to associate more readily with colonial students than did their English counterparts. The Ibos, however, simply experienced them as being less prejudiced, which in a sense they were.[1]

The meeting grounds were social clubs.[2] Friendships established in such contexts sometimes led to marriage. Judging from the long-standing interracial marriages encountered in the field it would seem that marriage with continental or other non-British girls was almost as frequent as those with English girls, at least among the registered student population. Of thirty-two marriages in a sample of the 1971 community in which the partners met and married in Britain before 1966, seven were interracial. Of these, five involved British girls and

1. It is likely that the different colonial pasts of their respective countries affected their attitudes towards colonial students. A Scandinavian, for instance, would be less likely to share English prejudices about 'naked savages'. Colonial experience does not necessarily account for differences in physical reaction towards negroes, however. A study conducted in 1901 concluded that the English found negro features physically repulsive, whereas the French did not; both, however, had had extensive contact with African colonies.

2. A.T. Carey cites an example of a social club in the West End which was formerly patronised by Europeans, a few Asians and English. By the mid 1950s its patrons were mostly negroes and continental domestic workers or English shop girls. Kanitkar p. 80, describes the 'special coffee bars' in Golders Green and Hampstead, where Indian students and continental au pair girls congregate.

two involved other whites (a German and a Dutch girl).

The intermarriages took place for a variety of reasons. Sometimes loneliness and the need for emotional security was the overriding motive. Such was the case of Arthur, who arrived in Britain in the early 1060s for a course in business studies. His friends knew that he was very lonely and wanted to marry. They knew also that he was unable to tind an Ibo girl to whom he was sufficiently attracted. It came as a complete surprise however, when he married a German girl after a very short courtship. Often a combination of factors led to marriage. A man who arrived in the early 1950s as an unsponsored student had a chequered carreer until he met his future wife. He had undertaken a variety of jobs, including that of a bus conductor for London Transport, and had been unable to advance beyond the initial qualifying exams for the full-time course he had in mind. He married a Dutch secretary working in London and his wife gave him the moral and material support he needed.

Such marriages met with a variety of response from friends and family, much of it hostile. Arthur maintains that his parents did not oppose his marriage because they did not know his wife's family, and so had nothing to object to. They would assume that he, Arthur, knew best since he alone knew his wife's people and was in a position to evaluate them as suitable in-laws. Arthur's explanation of his parents' attitude gives a clue to the opposition which greeted most intermarriages. It also suggests the reason for the marriages of many young men being arranged before they left home. It was the need, in customary law, for the families which were being linked by marriage to know each other well. Such knowledge was impossible if the intended wife was English. On the whole it was expected that a student who had no fiancee at home would remain single and marry an Ibo girl on his return, according to customary law.

For the workers and ex-seamen it was different. They were more disposed to marry local women, and settle down in Britain. Partly this was because they lacked the opportunity to improve their status by acquiring wealth or educational

qualifications, and could not, therefore, look forward to returning home in the foreseeable future. The situation of the colonial population of English working areas is described by Banton:

"All of the West Africans entertain the idea of returning to the country of their birth, but very few of them have any specific plans for doing so, and in this respect behaviour is a better guide than verbal statements of intention or hopes. Many of them, while often talking of the prospect of going back to Africa, are building up family ties and habits which pull in the opposite direction and few of them save any money. They talk of the possibility of winning the football pools and going to Africa for a holiday, or of taking their European wives there to see if they would like it, but it is clear that they are not likely to return unless they can do so as successful figures - for England is the country where men make their fortunes...."[1]

In the circumstances there was little point in postponing marriage. A white wife, moreover, could be a distinct asset. In the Tyneside community it was noted that English wives were able to act as intermediaries between the immigrant group and white society.[2] It was the wives who were often sent to get accommodation and even jobs for their men. For the less well-off, part-time students, too, these considerations must have operated in the choice of an English wife. Liaisons offered the hope of better jobs and accommodation. As their circumstances changed, however, so did their need for the women who had helped them. There are several instances in the existing population of men who entered into ephemeral relationships in the early years of their stay. Some relationships which were formalised in marriage eventually ended in divorce or separation. The whereabouts of former wives is unknown and of little consequence.

For a full-time student, too, a white wife was not without advantages.[3]

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1. Banton (1953) p. 11-12.
2. Collins (1951) p. 800.
3. Banton suggests that a returning student who brought with him a European wife might win concessions from the Europeans in the colony. p. 4.

For some she constituted a status symbol. For others, however, especially the first sons of important families, marriage to a white woman was an entanglement to be avoided at all costs. The fate of one such man who married an Irish girl in the 1950s is still talked about. His father, a national politician, was so angry that he seized a gun and had to be restrained from using it to kill his son. The old man's anger stemmed from the fact that the young man, his heir, should have assumed his father's mantle and worked to safeguard the family's enormous political and financial interests. To do so he had to make the right marriage. An appropriate match with a local girl would reinforce political allegiance with ties of affinity. His marriage to an outsider gave enemies of the family a weapon to use against them - the fact that the son could not or was 'too proud' to find a wife from among his father's constituents.

Carey suggests that West African students in the early 1950s wanted to accommodate the new values and way of life of their hosts, rather than adapt completely, as did some West Indian students. The West Africans sought acceptance only to the extent that it served their desire for national independence, and because they saw in social participation a test of their own worth. The evidence of Ibo-white relations supports this view. But such an explanation is psychological rather than sociological. An explanation of interaction in terms of individual perception and motivation is inadequate for the present purposes. A sociological explanation requires a different level of analysis, which makes use of structural rather than psychological factors. Demographic composition, political and legal developments, social and economic circumstances, provide the framework for interaction, and guide individual perception. These and other structural factors are thrown into sharper focus in the analysis of relationships between Ibos and other blacks, which follows.

Interaction with other Black Minority Groups. Ibos interacted extensively with other black minority groups, in formal and informal situations. Closest identification was achieved with other West Africans, - Nigerians, Ghanaians, and Sierra Leoneans. In colleges, hostels, social clubs and political organisations the Ibos were brought into interaction with Indian, Pakistani and West Indian students as well. But while they belonged to the same category by virtue of their common political and economic interests, and shared circumstances of life in Britain, the Ibos tended to confine the informal relationships of close friendship,[1] kinship and marriage to members of their own group.

A fertile meeting ground for the students was Hans Crescent, where the British Council had its main hostel for men. Apart from providing accommodation for 200 colonial students it attracted non-residents as guests for its many social and cultural activities, film shows, dances and lectures. In the early years it was used as a headquarters by the West African Students' Union and the Nigerian Union, among other societies.

In formal and informal exchanges the students were made aware of their common interests in relation to their hosts. Far from acting as a bridge between the newcomers and the host society as was intended, Hans Crescent and centres like it fostered and maintained social solidarity among colonial students.

If objective interests forced them together, relations were not always amicable. The less well-off students, particularly, found themselves at odds with their neighbours. To them the cushioned existence of life in a hostel was not available. The struggle for subsistence and the achievement of their ambitions sometimes brought them into sharp conflict with co-tenants and classmates. Vital letters from scholarship committees and appointment boards were assumed to have been opened and read, or stolen, by people living in the house. Incidents like the following, told by an Ibo informant, are easily recalled.

1. Friendship is used here in the sense of emotional and social nearness between individuals who share a supra- or extra-kin relationship which is entered into voluntarily and which is culturally recognised. Y.A. Cohen (1961) p.352.

"When I first came to Britain (1953) I was impoverished. At that time I was living in a house in Ladbroke Grove owned by a Yoruba man, with some other tenants, Ghanaian. One of the Ghanaians, a friend of mine, had a cousin who was treasurer to the Ghana Cocoa Marketing Board Student Scholarship Scheme. He arranged to get me a scholarship, saying that I was a Nigerian who had lived in Ghana and a man of great talent and so on. He said my mail would be O.K. (would not be tampered with) as 'we are all blacks here'. But the letter to me from the board was opened by another Ghanaian whom they had turned down twice. He reported to the Board that my claim was false, and I didn't get the award." Soon afterwards the Ibo tenant quarreled with the Yoruba landlord and left the house.

Their economic situation divided the students into two groups, according to the welfare officer of a central London college whose law students in the 195os and early sixties were 80% West African. In one group were the wealthy, who were able to afford decent flats, or hostel accommodation. The 'colonial English' atmosphere of the British Council suited them and they made full use of its facilities. Apart from these were the very poor students, often too poor to benefit from college subsidies for a hall of residence. As part-time students they were not entitled to the British Council services, and stayed away also to avoid the company of the more successful. They were forced to take up part-time work, like office-cleaning between 7 am and 9 am in the morning, or dishwashing at night. This resulted in inefficiency in academic work, failure in examinations, and therefore the termination of grants.[1] They had to accept crowded, inferior accommodation and were often involved in fights with other tenants over their wives, over the rent, and over 'disappearing' letters. Court cases between tenants were not infrequent. In 1958 an Ibo student at the college threw a brick at a Yoruba co-tenant, also a student, and was bound over to keep the peace.

1. In May 1961 Sir Charles Logan, Vice-Chancellor of London University, commented on 'the poor quality of external students, mainly from West Africa and mainly doing law and economics.' The failure rate was 71% for Intermediate Laws, 80% for B.A. General, and 86% for Economics Part 1, West Africa, May 1961.

For many students, then, the private housing situation led to social contact with other Nigerians or West Africans. Since accommodation was more easily obtained in African or West Indian owned houses, concentrations soon developed in areas characterised by their large immigrant populations. A report published in 1963 indicates that Brixton in South London, with the largest immigrant settlement in the city, had a rapidly increasing number of African students and their families (a fact which could be confirmed by a casual visit to the reading room of the public library.[1]). In Willesden, another main area of settlement, the African students had been the first 'immigrants' to arrive, in the 1940s. Hackney, Notting Hill and Paddington, the remaining areas with a large coloured population, each had several hundred African residents. Paddington, the authors of the report suggest, included many African ex-students who were now working after failing their exams. They were concentrated in a small, clearly defined area,[2] their households often containing related individuals but few elementary family units.

As landlords and tenants the Ibos were engaged in a variety of relationships with other Nigerians and West Africans, and occasionally with West Indians. Some relationships were more contractual than others but all had a particularistic element: people were brought into interaction by virtue of their common origins and shared identity of 'coloured immigrant' ascribed to West Indians and Africans, to workers and students alike, by members of the host society. Occasionally the relationship of landlord and tenant, or of co-tenant, was founded on a longstanding acquaintance or friendship which had originated in Nigeria. More often accommodation was found or disposed of through mutual acquaintances, or through membership of the same college or profession, or participation in the same voluntary association.

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1. Patterson (1963). As the editor of the report she was drawn to point out that students in Britain needed studying facilities since they had overflowed the public library reading room. p.8.
2. Harrow Road, Westbourne Park, and Queens Park area. p. 26.

Formal interaction between Ibos and other West Africans was facilitated by political organisations, professional associations and social clubs. Among the associations which played this role were the West African Students Union (WASU), the Nigerian Union, both political; the Kawari Klub and the Port Harcourt (Nigeria) People's Social Club (G.B.) both social; and the Nigerian Law Association.

WASU was not the first African Student organisation in the U.K. but by the early 1950s it was probably the most important and influential.[1] Its formation and strength derived from three factors: the common geographical origin of a large number of colonial students in Britain; the colour prejudice facing them; and their colonial status. The last two gave WASU the character of a protest movement. It was founded in 1924 by a Yoruba student who was prompted by the patronising and racist portrayal of Africans at the Wembley Exhibition of that year. In a dream he was directed by God to organise and develop a spirit of self-help, unity and cooperation among Africans abroad, for the removal of the colour bar.

In 1945 its membership stood at 100, out of a possible 1,000. By 1945 there were more than 300 members, out of the 2,300 West African Students in Britain. Despite the development of other student associations in the universities, and of broader-based organisations such as the Nigerian Union, it continued to attract the politically radical and race conscious students. They held meetings initially at the British Council hostel in Hans Crescent, but by the early 1950s had established two hostels of their own, one of which had offices and a club room in the basement.

Until the development of national associations in the years leading up to independence, WASU was the main vehicle for the expression of political protest. It was associated with anti-discrimination movements and the British Labour Party. Its main concern, however, was to reject the colonial relationship with Britain and to advance the cause of nationalism in the countries of West Africa.

1. P. Garigue, (1953).

No Ibos were included among the founder members in 1925. By the end of the period in question, however, they were regularly included among the leading officials. In 1967, for example, the offices of President, Vice-President and Under-Secretary were held by Ibos.[1] Informants suggest that in the 1950s particularly WASU was an important focus of activity and a means by which relationships with other West Africans were established and maintained.

Relationships with other Nigerians, Yoruba, Efik, Ibibio and others - were fostered in a variety of ways. In the decades of the 1950s, before regional interests in Nigeria had begun to assert themselves, the Nigerian students in London had much in common. Some were former colleagues and classmates; all were potentially members of the same Nigerian elite. Their common interests and sense of unity within the larger body of West Africans in London were expressed politically in the form of the Nigerian Union, and socially in the Kawari Klub.

Ibos were active in the London branch of the Nigerian Students' Union. In 1961 six out of eleven of the executive committee were Ibos, occupying the offices of chairman, and vice chairman, welfare and social secretaries, and study group organiser.[2] In 1966 they were less well represented, but still held the office of president.

According to an Ibo informant who was at one time its president, the Kawari Klub was formed in 1959 for social and cultural activities by a group of Nigerian students. It was deliberately non-political and non-tribal, its title being derived from the Hausa word for Niger, 'Kwara'. Patrons were drawn from each region of Nigeria, as were the officers.[2] It was hoped that the ties forged between the different ethnic groups by their sojourn abroad would be strengthened and extended when they returned to Nigeria. The fate of the association, which was fairly successful in the early 196os, was sealed by the outbreak of hostilities in Nigeria in 1966.

1. West Africa 1967.
2. West Africa November 1961.
3. West Africa March 1959. Half of the officers were Ibos.

A similar idea lay behind the formation of the Port Harcourt (Nigeria) Peoples Social Club (P.S.C.), described by its founders as 'non-ethnic or tribal grouping'.[1] It was designed to cater for everyone who had at some time or another been resident in the town of Port Harcourt in south east Nigeria. A list of the masters of ceremony at its inaugural dance in January 1966 indicates the truth of the founders' claim, for they included members of several ethnic groups - Ibo, Yoruba, and minority groups living in the vicinity of the town.

It is not known to what extent formal settings of this kind gave rise to informal, more intimate relationships between Ibos and members of other ethnic groups. That the intention for such existed in the minds of their founders is clear. It is likely that interaction within the institutional framework of college and hostel gave rise to as many friendships as did the associations set up specifically for the purpose. The significance of such associations here lies in the evidence they provide of a felt community of interest linking Ibos and other groups.

Informal relationships did not occur with equal frequency between the various groups. As a broad generalization, it may be said that Ibos established friendships with Yorubas and other Nigerian minorities, with West Indians, and with Asians, in that order. The Ibo student population recognised a status distinction between themselves and workers or 'immigrants': between West Africans, whom they regarded as mostly students, and West Indians, whom they saw as being workers or immigrants. The failure of members of the host society to differentiate between West Indians and West Africans, workers and students, and between the different grades of student, was bitterly resented.[2] The Ibos

1. West Africa January 1966.

2. The resentment is expressed strongly by Nwariaku, the Ibo writer in Tajfel and Dawson (1965). All coloured people, he states, are forced into the same category, despite ethnic and educational differences. p. 84. Carey (1956) p. 128 confirms the point that all colonials were put in the same social class as seamen and workers.

regarded themselves as superior to West African workers in socio-economic terms, and to West Indians in moral terms as well. The West Indian immigrant was commonly held to be lazy and profligate, lacking the drive of the students to better himself through study and return home to shoulder his responsibilities.[1] In this the Ibos reflected the prejudices of the host society. It was not until the late 1960s that West Africans and West Indians in Britain began to recognise common interests, expressed in the slogan 'Black Power'.

Intimacy, it seems, was least likely to occur between West African students and Asian students. Each group felt that it had little in common with the other apart from shared colonial and student status. According to Kanitkar, the Indians' stereotype of the African student resembled that held by white society, with an emphasis on sexual prowess and primitive origins.[2] The African attitude was equally derogatory. The Ibo image of the Indian students was that of a political weakling whose deference towards the former imperial master was in sharp contrast to the African's assertion of his rights.

The pattern of interaction with the women of the various groups, particularly the West Indian, contrasted with that of the men. For reasons mentioned earlier, Ibo students needed the companionship of women outside their own group. While masculine company was available from fellow Ibos, feminine company was not. Consequently, heterosexual friendships were sought with varying degree of success, and sometimes resulted in marriage. It is difficult to estimate the number of interethnic (as opposed to interracial) marriages which occurred before 1966. Calculation on the basis of existing intermarriages is hampered by the disruptive effect of the war, which brought about the termination of many relationships between Biafrans and their Nigerian or 'anti-Biafran' wives.[3] Another

1. Patterson (1963 b) discovered mutually derogatory attitudes among West Indians and West Africans in Brixton. West Indians tended to regard West Africans as savages, while the latter regarded the former as the descendents of slaves. One of Patterson's informants, an English curate, commented on the way the two groups kept apart at church socials. p. 258.

2. Kanitkar (1970) p. 18-20. In her experience there was little social mixing in the early 1960a between the two student groups; Indians invariably refused accommodation in African or West Indian Houses.

3. Women from minority groups within Biafra which opposed secession.

limitation on the use of existing intermarriages is the presumed departure of many of the couples concerned in the period before the war.

In view of the identity of interests and degree of interaction between Ibos and their fellow Nigerians in other contexts, one would expect a higher degree of intermarriage with Yoruba, Efik and Ibibio women than with other West Africans or West Indians. The exchange of women between these groups would express and reaffirm their interests. In fact, numbers are more or less equal. Of 32 marriages in the existing population which took place before 1966, seven are between Ibo men and other black women. The seven wives include three West Indians, two Nigerians, a Ghanaian and a Liberian.

TABLE 1.1. Ibo couples who met and married in Britain before 1966(Source: Marriage sample)1.

Ibo wife	Other black wife	White wife	Total
18	7	7	32
	3 West Indian	5 British	
	4 West African	2 Continental	

These numbers are of course too small to give anything more than a rough guide to the situation. But supposing the distribution to be a real one, various explanations for the evenness in numbers of West Indian and West African wives present themselves. It is likely that West Indian women were more numerous than West Africans, especially during the 1950s. Another factor is the greater accessibility of West Indian women who, while harbouring certain prejudices against African men might lack the social constraints excercised on, say, a Yoruba girl by her kin and townspeople abroad, who expect her to return home on completion of her course and marry according to custom. However, bearing in mind the lack of real evidence on this point, the suggestions offered here remain at the level of speculation. For a complete picture of heterosexual

1. For details of the composition of the marriage sample see Appendix I.

relationships between the groups, those which stopped at cohabitation or casual liaison must be added to the handful which actually resulted in marriage (or divorce). Evidence of these, more ephemeral, unions, however, is even harder to obtain, though some are known to have existed.

The attitudes towards men who involved themselves in relationships of this sort, and the type of man who did so, may be discerned in the following cases. The first concerns a man who felt liberated from traditional obligations.

> As a bright child of illiterate peasant farmers, Nweke had been given a scholarship by his town union. He did well at school and was eventually sent to Britain by the Union for a degree in economics. In 1959 he met a student nurse from the West Indies and decided to marry her. He did not ask his parents' permission, he said, because they were conservative and unsophisticated, and likely to object. He felt sure, in any case, that they would accept his judgement and welcome his wife when they met her. There was also the fact of his financial independence from them. His sponsors were the union, and his parents had no immediate sanctions to apply for his marrying against their wishes. However, the London branch of the town union expected to be consulted, and Nweke had to introduce his prospective wife at a formal meeting. For his part, he needed to know that his wife would be made welcome in the local circle in London, for the townspeople were a major source of emotional (and ultimately physical) support in Britain. Nweke was highly educated and well respected in the local circle, and his wife as a nurse was an asset to the group, so noone objected to the proposal except the man whose sister had been intended as Nweke's wife. He merely refused to officiate at the wedding.

The next case concerns a student who was persuaded by his sponsor that an outsider would not make a satisfactory wife.

> Pius fell in love with 'a mulatress' (half English, half Nigerian) when he arrived in Britain in 1961. He wanted to marry her, and wrote to ask the permission of his mother's brother, who had brought him up, was paying his college fees, and had special influence over him. The uncle pointed out that the girl would not understand the custom of their town or take to their way of life. Pius did not agree and planned to ignore his uncle's warning. Graddally, however, he realised that he really did want a wife from his own town. Such a marriage had safeguards; its stability was ensured because

there would be mutual understanding and trust between him and his wife, and effective means of settling disputes. If his wife offended him, Pius could send her home to her parents, who would send her back to his parents. He himself would avoid giving offence, for the shame it would bring to his parents and to him as well. These rationalisations were supported by the certain knowledge that if he had gone ahead with his decision to marry, his allowance from home would have been cut off.

In the third case the special circumstances of the student made marriage with a non-Ibo desireble.

Christopher came to Britain in 1959 for a degree course. He was wealthy, intelligent and charming, and had a promising future in his chosen profession. But his social relationships, in particular relationships with women, were restricted by his membership of a particular social group. He was an Osu, descendant of a ritual slave.[1] Most of the customary prohibitions on social intercourse between Osu and freeborn had declined; marriage alone remained out of the question. No girl, unless she were herself an Osu, would knowingly enter into a relationship with him which might lead to marriage. Christopher could either marry an Osu girl, of whom there were very few in London, or find a wife outside the community altogether. He chose the latter course, by marrying a teacher from Mauritius.

Other marriages took place between men and women of different ethnic groups who shared a common experience of life in the cities and townships of Nigeria, where they or their parents had migrated as traders or office workers. They saw themselves as citizens of Lagos or Port Harcourt, rather than as Ibos or Efiks or Yoruba. Common interests of this sort, common nationality and regional interests, were factors in the choice of Nigerian wives. Additional factors in liaisons between Ibos and other blacks abroad, were the shared experience of education, the liberation this brought for some categories of student, and the demographic imbalance. Why there were not more intermarriages of this type is explained by the attitudes towards 'outsiders'. A student whose wedding guests are analysed in the following section negotiated with his parents for four years before they agreed to his marriage in 1965 to a West Indian nurse.

1. The system is described in greater detail in a later chapter.

Such persistence accounts perhaps for the liaisons which failed to develop into permanent unions, and the cohabitations which became unsatisfactory substitutes for marriage.

The evidence of informal relationships in the early period points to the conclusion that while in many situations the Ibos and other black minorities belonged to the same category, in the significant areas of kinship and close friendship the Yoruba, West Indians and others were an out-group.

Interaction among Ibos. Cleavages with the group to some extent mirrored those within the wider immigrant population. They were based on status and occupation, and on place of origin. The various interests were expressed formally in the existence of unions and societies, and informally in patterns of friendship and marriage.

In the 1950s formal associations based on area of origin in Iboland were less in evidence than they were to become in the sixties. The impression of those years gained by people who were here at the time is that the community was small and undifferentiated in terms of area; that everyone knew everyone else. That it was smaller than it became in the 1960s is true.[1] That it was undifferentiated in terms of area is also true. Clubs like the Kawari Klub and the Port Harcourt People's Social Club expressed and facilitated informal interaction which cut across locality. An important focus of activity for Ibos from wide ranging backgrounds and areas was the N.C.N.C., the national political party which was led by Azikiwe and based in the Eastern Region of Nigeria. Until the overthrow of civilian government in 1966 it attracted the support of most Ibos in Nigeria and in London. There the energies of several students were channelled into a subsidiary youth organisation - the Zikist Movement - inaugurated in 1963.[2] In the context of such formal political associations social contacts were established and maintained.

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1. See p.37 f.n.1. The peak of university entrance was reached in 1961 and thereafter declined. Other types of student, however, continued to arrive in increasing numbers.

2. West Africa 1963.

In hostels and at the British Council, Ibos met each other and began lasting friendships, which are seen today in informal visiting, invitations to weddings and christenings and so on. Interaction occurred also at those centres of learning which attracted West African students in large numbers. Colonial students tended to concentrate in particular Inns of Court. In 1951, 75o colonials registered at the four Inns were distributed as follows: Lincoln's Inn 39%; Middle Temple 30%; Gray's 24% and Inner Temple 7%.[1] According to an Ibo informant Lincoon's Inn is the most popular among Ibo law students too. The choice of Inn was influenced by friends and relatives. Several existing friendships between men of different parts of Iboland are based on membership of the same Inn in the 1950s.

But if such associations cut across area, they reflected instead distinctions based on occupation and social status. The shared intellectual and professional interests implied in friendships founded on membership of the same Inn or college were the basis of many associations. It is probably true to say that in the 1950s social status was the major form of social differentiation. In particular a distinction was made between the categories of worker and student. From the evidence of current residents it appears that full-time students looked down upon the workers and even on part-time students, and did not mix socially.[2] Interaction outside college was limited by differential access to the British Council and hostels of full-time and part-time students. The latter, in any case, were inclined to avoid such centres of activity for reasons indicated earlier. For the same reasons they avoided the meetings and social activities of the local unions whose development in the 1960s is described shortly.

In a sense the two categories had little in common. Their backgrounds, aspirations and life chances were often strikingly different. The workers and ex-seamen included a number of older men and illiterates who pursued working

1. Carey (1956) p. 110.

2. See p 15 f.n. for the comment to that effect by a part-time student at London University.

class occupations and had little expectationsof high status occupations in Nigeria, should they return. The students, on the other hand, had much to look forward to. They had in many cases been selected as the brightest children in their villages and sponsored by bodies which had high hopes of a return on their investment. In Britain the young men regarded themselves as leaders of thought, and future political leaders. Their activities to this end were channelled through organisations like WASU. Their congruence in outlook, and identical hopes for the future were reaffirmed in other contexts too. Students were brought together in Old Boys' and Old Girls' reunions, called by their former teachers. A retired woman missionary says that she has kept in touch with her former girls in this way. Another, who spent 1956-9 on leave in England, held annual Old Boys' Reunions for former pupils studying in London, and each meeting attracted about thirty men. It seems unlikely, therefore, that the two groups were drawn together through shared ambitions or common experience.

There was one kind of status differential which operated particularly in heterosexual relationships: the hereditary status of slave and freeborn. While interaction between the two categories was unrestricted in most areas of social intercourse, marriage and relationships which might lead to a permanent union were forbidden by custom. The inhibiting effect of this ascribed status on relationships between Ibo men and women is illustrated in the following case.

A student whose wife had remained in Nigeria was extremely lonely in private lodgings, and wanted feminine company. His friends suggested that he went to see a particular Ibo girl they knew of. He could enjoy her company as others did, without getting involved. Intrigued, he went to visit the girl and found that she was indeed pleasant company; beautiful, well-behaved and highly educated.

(She was studying law). Despite these desirable qualities, however, she was ineligible as a wife, for she was an Osu, explained the informant. He did not go again to see her, and eventually she returned home, as a barrister, still unmarried.

The distinctions between workers and students, between full-time and part-time students, persisted into the 1960s, but were joined by a new set of cleavages, based on area of origin. The increase in the size of the student population saw a development of local units. At the organisational level, local interests and sentiments were manifested in town and clan unions, and 'family meetings'. At the more informal, diffuse level they were seen in the mutual rights and obligations recognised between townspeople; in the moral density of local units; in the informal social control exerted by members on each other, and in particular by the tendency to choose local partners in marriage. The organisational expression of local interests is dealt with at length in the following chapter. It may be useful, however, to note here some details of the development and function of local unions, in so far as they affected interaction among Ibos in the period in question.

Most unions came into existence in the early 1960s, as soon as sufficient number of people from a single area had arrived in Britain. Inaugurations were often announced in 'West Africa', a weekly magazine which enjoyed a wide circulation among West African students and was read by Ibos until 1967.[1] In September 1965, for instance, readers were informed that "Ogwashiuku Welfare Association has been inaugurated in London.....It is obsolutely non-political in structure....At a general meeting attended by 80 Ogwashians the following were elected..." There followed a list of nine executive committee members, including a patron. Another advertisement proclaimed that "the long sought for, the central voice for Asaba Division in Great Britain and Ireland is now evolved[2]."

1. With the declaration of secession by Biafra the magazine took up the Federal cause and remained consistently pro-Nigeria throughout the war.

2. West Africa February 1965.

Announcements sometimes included a statement of intent. Thus a newly formed divisional union was said to exist for 'the sole purpose of catering for the interests and welfare of all the people of the Division resident in and/or on visits to the U.K....' The moral and material welfare of members in Britain was a manifest and immediate function of local unions. At the same time certain other ends were served. These included the promotion of the political interests of the home community, and the excercise of political and organisational skills of students in Britain. The appeal to potential members emphasised the welfare function first, as a declared objective, and sometimes the political as well. Thus the recruitment campaign in 1963 for Owerri Divisional Union, which, since its formation in 1959 had declined in strength, stressed Owerri interests at home and abroad. At home, Owerri people constituted a minority which was suffering discrimination in regional politics, having no strong political representative in the regional government; and in London an Owerri man had recently died alone in hospital, unknown to his fellows.

Thus the growth of local unions was a response to several factors: to demographic changes, to the competition between local political units in Eastern Nigeria, which gathered pace after the achievement of national independence in 1960, and to the personal need for security in the difficult environment of London.

The activities of the local unions in London were confined mainly to social and welfare activities. There were annual get-togethers to which 'all the sons and daughters' of the town were invited. Sometimes the invitations were extended through the columns of West Africa. Frequently townspeople met to celebrate specific events which were of interest to them all, such as the wedding of a member, or the examination success and send-off party of another. Townspeople recognised certain rights and obligations toward each other, which were expressed in kinship terms. Often they were linked by ties of descent or affinity. The mutual obligations included hospitality and giving help when

required, including help in settling marital and financial problems.

If the circle of townspeople helped to meet the need for financial and emotional security in the young people, it also constrained them to fulfill their customary obligations. Social control was exerted, particularly by the older members, and sometimes in the formal setting of a union meeting. The following case concerns a young man who was forcefully reminded of his obligations in this way. He came to study in 1961, leaving his wife, a local girl behind. In Britain he had an affair with an English girl, who became pregnant. The wife's relations in London saw what was going on, and held a meeting to decide what should be done to save the situation. They decided that the wife should be brought to England immediately to satisfy her husband's need for feminine company, and sent for her. The young man's relatives in London were called in and asked to account for his behaviour. There was little that they could say in his defence, except that he had been motivated partly by the need for intellectual companionship: the English girl was a teacher, while the wife was barely literate. They insisted, therefore, that the newly arrived wife should take a course of training, to bring her up to her husband's educational level. At the same time they brought pressure to bear on the young man to behave in a responsible manner. He now maintains both women in separate households.

Locality was a factor in marital choice. The majority - three quarters - of marriages made before 1966 in the existing community involved couples whose home towns were within ten miles of each other. Less than a fifth occurred between couples whose home towns were more than 50 miles apart:

TABLE 1.2. Physical distance and year of marriage of Ibo couples who married before 1966. (Source: Marriage Sample.)

0 - 10 miles	70%	(127)
11 - 50 miles	17%	(30)
51 + miles	13%	(24)
	100%	(181)

These figures include all marriages contracted before 1966, regardless of location. The factor of locality appears to be less significant in the marriages of couples who met and married in Britain than in those which took place in Nigeria:

TABLE 1.3. Physical distance of home towns of couples and place of marriages contracted before 1966 (Source: Marriage Sample.)

Distance	Met and married in Nigeria before 1966		Met and married in U.K. before 1966		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0 - 10miles	115	77	12	38	127	70
11 - 50 "	23	16	7	23	30	17
51 + "	11	7	13	39	24	13
TOTAL	149	100	32	100	181	100

Just over a third of the U.K. marriages concerned individuals with the same place of origin as opposed to three-quarters of the Nigerian marriages. About the same proportion are between men and women from widely separated areas (this figure includes the interracial and interethnic unions) while the corresponding proportion for Nigerian marriages is negligible.

The tendency for single people in London to marry further afield is dealt with first: The 39% whose wives came from distant areas are accounted for by three factors: proximity, ideology and structural circumstances. The factor of proximity has already been dealt with in the context of the demographic composition of the population. The unfavourable ratio of men to women limited the possibility of meeting and marrying a local girl, and created the need for heterosexual relationships with women outside the group, In the small, cohesive London community individuals were brought into contact with other Ibos whom they would not, perhaps have encountered in Nigeria. This was particularly so in the years before local units emerged, thus providing a focus for activity

between local people. The ideological factor includes the concept of marriage to which young people were exposed in Britain. They increasingly saw marriage as a union which could and should be freely entered into by individuals on the basis of mutual attraction and personal compatibility.[1] The idea of romantic love was imcompatible with selection on the basis of area, birth or other ascribed characteristics. In keeping with the changing definition of marriage and conjugal roles was the freedom of association and lack of supervision of heterosexual relationships they encountered in Britain. Social contacts could not be controlled by kin as efficiently as they could at home. Meetings between prospective spouses could not so easily be arranged, or contact limited to people within the circle of eligibles. In the ideological climate of permissiveness and individualism, moreover, it was considered inappropriate that they should.

The economic factor operated in favour of outmarriages only in a minority of cases. It affected only those who were financially independent, and whose kin therefore had no meaningful sanctions to apply when an undesirable marriage appeared likely.

In view of the unfavourable demographic circumstances and ideological climate in Britain, the 39% of couples in which the wives came from afar needs perhaps less explanation than the equally large proportion - two fifths - who found partners from the same locality. Sometimes the choice was involuntary. A young man from the extreme south of Ibo land tells how he wanted to marry a girl from Owerri, some 60 miles north. However, her brother, who was also studying in London, insisted that she married a man from her own town. There was only one such person in London, and the girl had to accept him, though he was the last person she would have married if there had been any choice.

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1. The notion of romantic love was not new to the migrants, as the literature or changing patterns of marriage and family life in West Africa shows. See G. Jahoda (1958); K. Little (1967); O.P. Omari (1960). A fuller discussion of ideologies of marriage occurs in Chapters 5 and 6.

The explanation for her brother's insistence, and for the large proportion of endogamous marriages in London, is twofold. It involves both ideological and structural factors. There was, first of all, the traditional view of marriage as an alliance between two families rather than a private arrangement between two individuals. Next was the desirability, in the traditional view, of an alliance between local families rather than between strangers, people defined as being outside the local unit. These two ideological factors had structural counterparts: the financial dependence of students abroad on their kin at home, hence the objective superiority of collective over individual interests; and political relationships between local groups. These factors may be summarised as follows:

	Ideological factors:	Structural factors:
I	definition of, and attitudes towards, outsiders	political, economic and social relationships between local groups.
II	marriage as a family affair, not just the individual's.	financial dependence of students on kin and other sponsors.

An analysis of ideologies of marriage - the expectations of the couple and their kin, norms of procedure and conduct, accepted criteria for selection and so on - and the definition of social units in Iboland, is not attempted here. These are issues which may be left for a moment. Marriage norms and practice in the early period are dealt with more usefully by comparison with wartime and post-war patterns, in later chapters. The other constraining factor, financial dependence, may however be usefully considered at this point.

The economic sanction which could be applied against men who threatened to ignore the traditional requirements was in most cases a force to be reckoned with. The considerable number of endogamous marriages would seem to indicate acceptance of traditional norms and practice. But whether the acceptance was voluntary, the product of effective socialization, or involuntary, in response

to constraint excercised by kin, is open to question. In the light of subsequent events it can be argued that conformity to expectations in the early period reflects reluctant acquiscence as much as a positive commitment to traditional values.

The threat to cut off allowances was an effective sanction of which some parents made good use. Most students, it will be recalled, were in receipt of money from one source or another. Most were privately sponsored by kin, friends or town union who undertook to pay their fees and maintain them in Britain. This undertaking, made to Nigeria's Eastern Region Students' Advisory Board, was a condition of their acceptance for the journey to Britain. The withdrawal of this financial support would have placed them in an awkward position. In the 1950s it would have meant abandoning full-time study in favour of part-time study, if such a course was available, and menial paid employment, with the unfortunate consequences for health and academic success noted above. After 1962 this course of action was in any case illegal. It was not to be encountered lightly, although there is evidence that students did in fact take up employment after perhaps one year's full-time study. It seems likely, therefore, that the economic relationship between student and sponsor was a significant factor in interaction between different categories of Ibo. Equally, it was effective in regulating social intercourse between the Ibos and other individuals.

This discussion of the groupings and cleavages within the Ibo community may be brought to a close with a wedding reception which took place towards the end of the period, in 1965.[1] An analysis of the invitees draws together the categories of association which have emerged in the course of the chapter.

The style of the reception was untypical of others of the period. It was held in a Chinese restaurant, and guests came by invitation only. (This was in contrast to the usual pattern of hiring a church hall and entertaining as many people who wished to come, with food prepared by the womenfolk.)

1. The event, which was attended by the writer, was recalled with the help of informants who were also present.

The meal was preceeded by drinks in an annex, and followed by a party in the bridegroom's flat. The wedding was untypical in other ways too, in that the bridegroom was a highly successful student (he achieved a Ph.D. in the following year, and came from an eminent family), and was marrying a West Indian girl.

The guests at the reception were mostly Ibo. The exceptions were provided by the bridegroom's English professor, and two English women who came at the invitation of Ibomen. The bride had studied nursing in Liverpool and had few acquaintances in London apart from her husband's people. She was represented by her brother and his wife who had made the journey from the Bahamas for the occasion.

The Ibo guests were related to the bridegroom in a variety of ways, of which six may be mentioned. There were first of all his college friends, invited on the basis of common academic and intellectual interests, (reaffirmed in many hours spent in discussion in the coffeebar of the London School of Economics). A second group consisted of political associates who were, like the bridegroom himself, active supporters of the N.C.N.C. A third group was drawn from his former school mates at Uzoakoli Methodist College in Eastern Nigeria. Selected people were invited from the bridegroom's local community in London. Other guests were known to him from childhood by virtue of their upbringing in the same town, the regional capital, Enugu. Finally, there were family friends, the sons of colleagues of his father. Some of the guests were related to the bridegroom in more than one respect. An academic friend, for instance, was also a methodist and old boy of Uzoakoli College; a close family friend, the son of his father's colleague, was a fellow student of law at London University; a colleague in the N.C.N.C. came from the same home town;and so on.

Distinctions between some of these categories were affably drawn in the toasts and speeches which preceded the meal. Statements about the virtues of a methodist education, and the methodist way of life, from Uzoakoli Old Boys met with friendly jibes from the Catholic majority. Politics and the legal profession were similarly the target of jokes and rejoinders. Little attention was drawn to the non-Ibo members of the gathering after the initial expression of gratitude, to the professor in particular, for coming. Perhaps the most forceful reminder of the English setting of the occasion was brought home later in the evening, when the bridegroom's English neighbours took exception to the party next door and called the police.

Conclusion. The self image of the first generation of students as adventurous travellers with a thirst for knowledge and social intercourse, in contrast to their narrow-minded, technocratic successors of the 1960s, has an element of truth in it. The Ibo population of the 1950s was, less of a unit than it became the following decade. Interaction with other Africans, if not with members of the host society, took place to a greater extent than than later. The explanation for the change is structural and ideological.

Demographic changes were an important factor in the situation. The influx of students in the 1960s, followed by their wives and fiancees, encouraged the development of relationships within the group, and eventually of units based on place of origin. Women began to arrive in fairly large numbers in the early 1960s, for several reasons. Apart from the general advancement of education for women, there was the notion that a wife should take a course of study, however brief, to give her an experience similar to her husband's. Added to this was the usefulness of the wife as a wage earner in Britain, as she could supplement the family income while her husband studied full-time. A fourth reason for the migration of wives and fiancees was the fear of the development of liaisons between the students and English women. The more even sex ratio in the 1960s reduced slightly the tendency for interaction

with foreign women. Equally, it increased the expression of community sentiments by means of social activities - weddings, send-off parties, and annual get-togethers. With larger numbers of Ibos, of former classmates, townsmen and kin, there was less need, and less time available, to cultivate the acquaintance of non-Ibo students.

There were important political factors in the change of attitude and pattern of interaction. In the 1950s, before national independence, Ibos had much in common with other colonial students, particularly with West Africans. The community of interest was expressed in formal organisations like WASU and the Nigerian Union. After 1960 the assertion of regional interests within Nigeria reinforced relationships within the major ethnic groups at the expense of relationships between them. National independence, again, strengthened the tendency to divide further on the basis of smaller local units within the Ibo community. The interests of the home community had to be defended and promoted by the sons abroad who saw themselves, in any case, as the leaders of the future.

The second aspect of political independence relevant here was the difference it made to ideological commitment towards Britain. The students of the 1950s identified positively with Britain as the 'mother country' although their nationalist ambitions created a certain ambivalence. The students of the 1960s, on the other hand, were less committed to the host society. They were less inclined to regard it as the 'mother country' and seat of wisdom, though those sentiments had been inculcated in childhood and lingered on. For them, the journey to Britain was born as much of educational and economic necessity as the desire to travel to the country of the former rulers. The courses they sought were unavailable in Nigeria, but necessary for social advancement in Nigerian society, and they came simply to acquire qualifications.

The success and security of which the first generation of students had been assured was no longer guaranteed to the students of the 1960s. Their greater numbers reduced their bargaining power, and the competition for qualifications perhaps overshadowed the more liberal aspects of education abroad. Their predecessors were better able to afford the leisurely exchange of ideas and experiences with non-Ibos, which they boast of today. They had the time and inclination, perhaps, to make use of the opportunities presented by travel and residence in a foreign country.

Demographic and political changes went closely in hand with social attitudes. The impression conveyed by early students that colour prejudice was less in evidence in the 1950s than it is today is probably accurate. Several factors affected the attitude of the host society towards the students. Numbers of commonwealth immigrants rose steadily in the 1950s and reached a dramatic peak in 1961, in anticipation of the restrictions on entry introduced in the 1962 Immigration Act. Race riots had taken place sporadically in the previous decade, reaching a climax in 1958 with the disturbances in the Notting Hill area of London. Added to these factors was the attainment of political independence by several of the colonies whose nationals were the object of increasing resentment. Taken together, these events help to explain the diminishing receptiveness of the host society towards coloured students, who were indistinguishable from the immigrants proper to the mass of the public. The same factors, in reverse, account for the growing disinclination of the students to cultivate relationships with Londoners. The absence of informal intercourse led to the increasing use of hostile stereotypes by both sides, which further reduced the tendency for interaction. The situation was selfperpetuating.

Finally, economic factors affected the solidarity of student groups. After 1962, financial hardship induced by the need to retain student status led to a growing dependency on their own resources. In terms of housing

this meant accommodation with African, and sometimes Ibo, landlords. The latter course was, in any case, necessitated by the inavailability of accommodation in English or white houses.

The early period, then, was characterised by changing motivations and circumstances, and concomitant changes in the pattern of interaction with whites, with other blacks and with fellow Ibos. An intensity of relationships among Ibos existed in the 1950s but was less likely to be manifested in formal organisations. In the 1960s formal organisations - unions based on community of origin - developed with the result that cleavages within the group became apparent. But internal boundaries of this sort did not undermine the fundamental difference between Ibos and non-Ibos. The distinction was seen in such activities as the wedding reception described above, and in marriage itself.

The period as a whole was characterised by a degree of identification with other West Africans, particularly with Nigerians. This is in sharp contrast to the following periods, as we shall see. The identification with fellow students from Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone was based on a community of interest and manifested in formal associations like WASU and the Nigerian Union. It was seen in informal interaction under the auspices of the British Council, in housing arrangements, and occasionally in selection of partners in friendship and marriage. In respect of the latter it is important to note that in response to conditions in Britain over a third of the marriages made in London involved non-Ibos, and that half of these women were black. They included a number of Nigerian women - Yoruba, Efik and Ibibio - who were acceptable on account of their geographical origins, nationality and political interests.

One of the tasks of the next chapter is to show how the same factors, in changing circumstances, sealed the fate of these intermarriages, and shaped the marital careers of a generation of young men and women studying in London.

CHAPTER TWO.

The Crisis Period, May 1966 - January 1970.

Introduction. In the period before the war in Nigeria the Ibos in London were seen to be individuals interacting within the framework of the West African, student, immigrant community. The absence of clearly defined boundaries in most areas of interaction made them a social category rather than a social group. In the crisis period they became, by contrast, a unit clearly distinguishable from other West African groups by virtue of their solidarity, expressed in formal organisation and informal interaction.

The Ibo response to the crisis of the war was immediate and striking. From an actor's point of view the changing pattern of interaction could be explained by the sense of common injury which pervaded their lives:

> "Before the war people didn't really know each other. They came to study and went as soon as they had finished. The war united us. Our families all suffered at the hands of the Nigerians...."

> "The word 'Biafra' had a magical effect. People started trusting others, were ready to help anybody to get college places, jobs, rooms...close friendships grew out of working on committees....people you met at meetings and demonstrations....."

The perceptiveness of these remarks will become clear in the following pages, in which the pattern of interaction within the group, and between Ibos and outsiders during the war, is described and analysed. First it is necessary to consider the external events and circumstances in response to which the new pattern of social relationships developed. A brief outline is given here of the events and issues of the Nigeria-Biafra war, and of objective circumstances - economic, legal, political and social - of Ibos in London, which were thereby affected.

The issues of the war in Nigeria, and the events which marked its progress, concern us only to the extent that they affected the way of life of the Ibos in London. This requirement, fortunately, reduces the need to choose between the conflicting interpretations of the affair by the parties to it. A purely objective account of a situation such as this is in any case almost impossible to achieve. The objective here is to deal with the issues of the conflict in their order of relevance for the people in the study. Events, too, are presented in the order in which they were seen to occur by Biafrans and their sympathisers.

To its proponents, Biafran secession was a readjustment of artificial frontiers imposed under colonialism. In that sense it was the first genuine movement for African independence. In this view, Nigeria was an artificial creation which had, since its inception, been threatened by centrifugal forces in the socio-cultural and political spheres. In the socio-cultural sphere, traditional differences of language, religion, social organisation and patterns of authority between the component peoples had been reinforced by modern developments. The customary differences between the dominant ethnic groups, and particularly between the northern and southern halves of the country, were perpetuated by the creation of administrative units which largely coincided with major ethnic boundaries. Traditional political systems were reinforced by the policy of indirect rule. Educational developments and the activities of foreign missionaries were concentrated in the southern regions and added to the divergence of outlook between north and south. These cumulative changes fostered the different values held by the dominant ethnic groups. Thus the Hause-Fulani of the north remained elitist and conservative in outlook while the Yoruba Ibo and related groups in the two southern regions were more meritocratic and more receptive to change.

Political conflicts in the new state were superimposed on socio-cultural differences, and were mutually reinforcing. The political development of the country was founded on a structural weakness: the acquisition of independence by the component regions before that of the Federation as a whole. Since the regions were coterminous with the main socio-cultural boundaries, so too were the major political parties, and national campaigns were fought in ethnic terms. The years preceding independence and following it saw a struggle for power between the three regions - Northern, Western and Eastern - and a marked absence of national unity. There was, as one observer has pointed out, no single conception of Nigeria.[1] For some, notably the southern elite, it was a vehicle to personal power; For the masses it was a source of material benefits; While to the incumbents of traditional political office, notably the northern emirs, it represented the forces of social revolution, to be resisted. The basis of political support in the new system was localised. The campaigns were fought according to the need for amenities, the of office, rather than by rules appropriate to the Westminster model of government inherited by the new state.

These factors culminated in a series of events which precipitated the crisis of 1966. Opinions differ as to the significance of particular historical factors. Some see the immediate cause of the war as the military coup of 1966. Sympathisers of the Biafran cause saw the military coup as the culmination of a series of events which had gradually eroded Nigerian unity since independence in 1960. The country had achieved sovereignty as an uneasy alliance of the three regions. A complex relationship between private enterprise, public money and political profit was manifested in a state of political corruption and incompetence of which many people were unhappily aware.

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1. H. Bretton (1962). Other useful sources for this period in Nigeria's history, written before the war or in its early stages, are K. Post (1963) A.H.M. Kirke-Green (1967), J.P. Mackintosh (1966).

The deteriorating situation produced a series of national crises and by 1966 the country was ripe for the revolution which occurred in January of that year with the overthrow of civilian rule.

The military coup, led by Major-General Ironsi, was greeted with widespread approval. However, the fact that no leading Ibo politicians were killed; that the head of the supreme military council, Ironsi, was an Ibo; that he drew heavily on Ibo advisers; and that he established unitary government by the now notorious Decree 34, convinced some Hausa and Yoruba leaders that the coup had been staged in Ibo interests and represented an attempt by the Ibos to take the country over. There followed in Northern Nigeria a series of assaults on the lives and property of people from South-Eastern Nigeria, most of them Ibo. The massacres of May 29th, July 29th and September 29th created a flood of refugees returning to the Eastern Region from all parts of the Federation. The massacre of July 19th, directed primarily at Ibo army personnel, led to the assumption by General Gowon (then Lt.Colonel) of the office of Supreme Commander of the Nigerian Armed Forces and Head of the Nigerian State.

In January 1967 the Supreme Military Council was convened at Aburi, in Ghana, a safe distance from the scene of the troubles. There the regional governors attempted to reach a political solution to the crisis. A broad agreement was reached on a confederal system for Nigeria, a system which favoured the regions at the expense of central control. However, the Supreme Military Commander failed to implement the agreement, and thereby precipitated a complete breakdown of confidence in the Easterners.

A particular grievance of theirs was that the Federal Government had failed to pay the salaries of a vast number of Federal employees who had fled to the East at the outbreak of the killing, payment of which had been agreed at Aburi. In response the Eastern Region withheld its oil revenues

to the Federal Military Government. The Lagos government retaliated in April 1967 by imposing a blockade on the region, which was effectively cut off from that date by land and sea. Late in May the constitution was amended to make way for a new structure of twelve political and administrative divisions replacing the former four regions (a new Mid-West Region had been added to the Northern, Western and Eastern Regions in 1963). Again this was seen in the east as a unilateral and arbitrary action by the head of state which contradicted the terms of the agreement reached at Aburi. A few days later, therefore, on May 30th 1967, the Eastern Region seceeded from the federation to form the independent republic of Biafra. In July the Federal Government invaded the area in order to reestablish control. The military action in July was the prelude to two and a half years of bitter fighting.

Both sides suffered reverses but on account of their superior military strength the Nigerians gradually made inroads into the secessionist areas. As the area under Biafran control shrank, large sections of the community evacuated their homes and retreated into the interior. The political and administrative headquarters of the new state were similarly shifted several times. The improvised air strips, which finally became used only under cover of darkness, were Biafra's lifeline to the outside world. By means of the famous night flights the beleaguered people received food and medical supplies and armaments. When the last of the airstrips fell to the Nigerians, the war could no longer be prosecuted and came to an end in January 1970. Defeat was formally acknowledged in Lagos by a Peace Mission led by an eminent Biafran who had at one time been Nigeria's Chief Justice. After a heroic bid for independence, the defeated territory came under military occupation.

This grossly over-simplified version of events leaves out much of the background of the crisis and the progress of the war. But it reflects fairly accurately the situation as it was defined by the Ibos in London. The parallel developments in political organisation in the Ibo community will

be treated shortly. The remainder of the introduction is given to an account of the objective circumstances of the Ibos in London as they were affected by the events in Nigeria. (Since these issues have already been dealt with in some detail[1] only a brief reminder is necessary to set the scene for the analysis which follows.)

The blockade on the Eastern Region in April 1967, followed by the military attack in July and systematic air raids thereafter, produced considerable dislocation within Biafra. The families of students in London were continuously on the move as one front after another fell to the Nigerian army. The high degree of mobility and loss of assets and personal effects made the task of communicating with their sons and daughters abroad difficult and sometimes impossible. The students' supply of money, as well as of news, from home was impeded by the blockade on the one hand, and by financial hardship on the other. The majority of students, it will be recalled, were privately financed, sponsored by kin and town unions. The private students were not alone in losing their grants and allowances. Those with Federal Government scholarships had to declare their allegiance to the Federal Government before receiving money. Holders of regional scholarships, too, often failed to receive them in the administrative confusion and reallocation of resources which followed the outbreak of war.

A solution to the difficult financial situation of most students was to take up paid employment. But for many, their status as students under the 1962 Immigration Act made such a course of action illegal. Other factors, such as the tendency for employers to discriminate against black applicants further reduced the chances of Ibo students finding congenial part-time or full-time work, which would enable them to carry on their studies part-time or postpone them until the trouble was over.

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1. See General Introduction .

Financial problems were exaccerbated by the increasing cost of higher education, for in 1968 the government subsidy for overseas students was withdrawn. Some undergraduates and postgraddates were fortunate enough to receive assistance from scholarship committees, while others tapped the reserves of the African Educational Trust, the Educational Grants section of the Family Welfare Association, and similar bodies. Students who had been resident in London for five years were eligible to apply for local authority maintenance grants, and many did so. For most, however, the only solution was to start working, regardless of the legal restrictions. This course of action was widely adopted, and generally undetected by the authorities.

Communication with home was not suspended for the whole of the war. In the early period it was facilitated by individual travellers who were prepared to carry letters with them to families whom they knew how to locate. Well-connected students were able to use visiting dignitories and businessmen in this way constantly. Those with humbler backgrounds were more frequently cut off and suffered correspondingly greater emotional distress. All, however, felt themselves to be the target of oppression in Nigeria and abuse in Britain. Their legal and economic circumstances were seen to be but one aspect of official hostility to the Biafran cause. Thus punitive action taken where a student violated his term of entry by working for money was attributed to official hostility towards Biafrans in particular rather than law-breakers in general. The political, military and moral support offered by the British government to the Nigerian Federal Military Government was an important component in the objective situation of the Ibos in London. The supply of small arms and ammunition, of armoured cars and trained personnel, and of diplomatic assistance, publicly acknowledged by the British Government, reinforced the Biafran's sense of alienation from the host society.

In short, there were several dimensions to the problem of living in Britain during the war years. The objective situation of Ibos in London involved problems associated with legal status and the cost of education; with obtaining jobs and accommodation; with the failure of communications with Biafra; and the emotional stresses this induced; and with the political situation of Biafrans in relation to the British Government whose open support for their opponents reinforced their sense of isolation and vulnerability.

The response to this situation may now be seen in terms of social interaction. A new identity, that of 'Biafran', and stronger identification with a clearly defined political group, was manifested in new patterns of interaction, both formal and informal in character. The pattern of relationships in the war period may be considered in two stages. The first concentrates upon internal organisation, upon social activities and networks within the group. The other deals with the nature and strength of boundaries between the Ibos and non-Ibo Biafrans, between Ibos and Nigerians, between Ibos and other black minorities, and between Ibos and whites.

Internal Organisation. The pattern of association within the community shows a marked discontinuity between the pre-war and war-time periods, though some overlaps occur. Political unification, for instance , could be seen developing in the first half of the decade, some time before secession was effected. The proliferation of local unions , similarly, was a continuation of a trend which had started some years earlier in response to demographic and political changes. Both developements, however, were accelerated with the declaration of Biafran independence and reached a peak in 1969. In other respects the pattern of association was entirely novel. There were formal organisations which cut across local ties, reflecting professional,convivial, religious or other interests. Informal networks, both local and non-local in character, crystallised around new meeting places and points of interaction.

In particular, courtship and marriage acquired a new dimension consistent with the altered circumstances and patterns of cleavage.

Although courtship and marriage has been singled out for special attention, the process of political unification is illuminating for the light it throws on the structure of social relationships in general. It is appropriate to begin, therefore, with a consideration of the movement towards political unification, as the first and most striking - at least, to the casual observer - response to the political crisis in Nigeria.

Political unification. The process is discussed in three stages. First, a brief account is given of the historical development of the major control organisations: The Eastern Nigeria Union, the Biafra Union, and the Divisional Assembly. Next, the structure and composition of these bodies is analysed. Finally, there follows a description of political processes, the configuration of interests and the idiom in which these interests are articulated.

A major problem in documenting the development of national political organisations is the discrepancy in the accounts of informants, which vary according to their political interests. Reliance on these accounts is made necessary by the virtual absence of available written records. Several national organisations existed before the war, some regionally based, some ethnically based and others factions of the first type which sought the legitimate overthrow of the incumbents in office. The major organisations were the ethnically based Ibo Union, the regionally based Eastern Nigeria Union, and certain factions, of which Sunrise was the most prominent. Although it is not clear which of these was established first,it is apparent that for a while, early in 1967, they coexisted, and were eventually subsumed, or cast into obscurity, by the new Biafra Union.

The Eastern Nigeria Union was established in 1966, some five years after the equivalent unions for students from the Western and Northern regions.

Several reasons are offered by informants for its late emergence. They include directives from Eastern Region politicians in the early 1960s to avoid the development of institutionalised competition between regional organisations in London. Another reason given is the preoccupation of the eastern students with their studies, which left them with little time or interest for politics. It is likely that the objective reasons for the absence of a regional union in the early years are two: the preoccupation of politically conscious students with the activities of the national political party, the N.C.N.C. and its youth wing, the Zikist Movement; and the absence of a specific unifying factor. The activities of the N.C.N.C. were suspended with the overthrow of civilian rule in January 1966, and the unifying factor which had been absent hitherto appeared forcefully with the massacres in Nothern Nigeria later in that year, which affected the families of students from all over the Eastern Region.

In 1966 an Ibo Union was in existence in London, attracting the support of only a few hundred people. They were recruited on an informal basis by means of personal contacts, and left the majority of the student population unaffected. In response to the troubles in Nigeria, the Eastern Nigeria Union was formally constituted late in 1966. A mass meeting was held at the Africa Centre in Covent Garden, London, for the purpose of drawing up a refugee programme and distributing literature. An inaugural dance, held in the same month, attracted six hundred easterners and raised £520 $$ in aid of refugee relief.[1] A formal election was held shortly afterwards, in April 1967, at which the gathering, of one thousand, elected a full executive committee, drawn systematically from the various ethnic groups (the principle was labelled '444' the four main groups in the region being equally represented).

1. West Africa, December 1966

A faction of dissidents continued to operate under the banner of the Ibo Union of Great Britain and Ireland, In the same month as the 'Enugbi' election they held a dance in London, again for the purpose of fund raising.

The formalization of Eastern Region student activities early in 1967 was partly a response to the course of events in Nigeria. The Aburi Agreement reached in January of that year, had advocated a confederal constitution, and the autonomy of the regions called for a formal organisation to represent the interests of students abroad. When, in May 1967, the terms of the agreement were violated by the arbitrary declaration of twelve states by the Chairman of the Supreme Military Council, the Eastern Nigeria Union became the Biafra Union of Great Britain and Ireland.

The change was in name only, for the executive committee remained the same and so, generally speaking,did the aims and activities of the union, It was decided, however, that the collection of money should be made on a wider and more systematic basis, and various committees were set up for the purpose. The first, and most important, was the Civil Defence Committee, to collect money from foreigners (e.g. 'The British'); the Action Committee whose task it was to arrange chairs at meetings, to hang posters, to marshall demonstrations and handle confrontations with hostile observers (e.g.Yoruba); the Womens Wing, which was accountable to the Civil Defence Committee; Win the War Fund; and others. There was, apparently, no clear definition of the functions and accountability of these bodies, and much of the subsequent turmoil and competition within the union may be traced to their vagueness and confusion of aims.

Ancilliary organisations of this sort proliferated during the war. Their semi-autonomous status and undefined relationship with existing bodies exaccerbated conflicts of personality. These organisations will be considered later in a different context. The task here is to trace the development

of the Biafra Union and the emergence of perhaps the most crucial and for the present purposes most interesting organisation, the Divisional Assembly.

The Divisional Assembly developed out of the Civil Defence Committee (C.D.C.) whose role was ambiguous for the first few months of the war. The C.D.C. was responsible not only for fund raising from Biafrans but for servicing the union expenses in respect of hall bookings, court cases and similar expenditure. In 1968 its fundraising activities were extended and made more systematic through the strudture of divisional unions. Each existing divisional union was asked to send two representatives to an enlarged Civil Defence Committee. The new body, which became known as the Divisional Assembly, was controlled by the C.D.C. executive, and hence indirectly by the Biafra Union.

The ambiguous relationship between the Divisional Assembly and the Biafra Union aroused fears of abuse of resources. It gave rise to accusations and counter accusations of corruption and mismanagement. The confusion, which came to a head over the arrangement of the second Anniversary Dance in May 1969, produced a commission of enquiry which set up a constitutional committee. The latter advocated a separation of powers by removing the task of fundraising altogether from the Biafra Union. The Civil Defence Committee was divorced from the Divisional Assembly whose fundraising activities it had hitherto controlled. The Treasurer and Financial Secretary of the Assembly could no longer be members of the Biafra Union executive. The Civil Defence executive was to be replaced by an executive elected from the floor of the Divisional Assembly. No longer run by a committee of the Union, the Assembly would no longer be subject to its authority. The aims and activities of the two bodies would henceforward be quite separate.

The Union was to remain the 'voice of the people', presenting their case to the outside world. It would disseminate information, organise demonstrations and petitions. The Divisional Assembly, on the other hand, would concern itself with fundraising within the Biafran community, and be organised on entirely different principles from the Union.

There is evidence that opinions as to the respective roles of the Union and the Divisional Assembly differed sharply. For some of its members the Assembly was the Parliament to the Union's executive government. As the only truly representive body, its task was the discussion of general issues and the drawing up of policies to be implemented by the Union and conveyed to the representative of the Biafran Government at Biafra House, in Earl's Court, London. This view came to be widespread, and the Divisional Assembly to be seen as a powerful organ of government, its offices sought by all political activists.

For some members of the Biafra Union, however, the Assembly was seen as occupying an entirely subordinate position reflecting its narrower range of interests, its development from an ancillary body of the union, and its remoter links with Biafra House. In the opinion of others not connected with either organisation the Assembly had been formed as a political move to counter the Biafra Union executive. Its claim to stand for different ends was a rationalisation, its real motives as dubious as those of the group it set out to counter.

The competition, both personal and structural, between the two organisations in 1968 and 1969 need not concern us here. It remains to analyse the structure of the national political organisations in terms of their component units and principles of organisation. It is here that the traditional cleavages and modifications which occured in response to the war are most pronounced and can be of most help in understanding the pattern of relationships in general.

The proponents of the Divisional Assembly could justly claim that it was a representative body in a way that the Biafra Union was not. Membership of the Biafra Union was automatically open to every Biafran in London. The activists included a large proportion of 'old politicians', whose length of stay in Britain, and common interests in the N.C.N.C. and the Nigeria Union,

had created links which were naturally carried over into the successive movements to which they belonged. There were no clearly defined channels of communications between the leadership of the union and its rank and file, a miscellaneous collection of individuals who obtained membership directly by virtue of their Biafran citizenship, rather than indirectly through constituent units.

The Divisional Assembly by contrast had a clearly defined hierachial structure, at the base of which were the local unions. The Divisional structure was modelled on the system of political and administrative units in the new state. With the creation of the Divisional Assembly in London in 1968, formal organisations emerged for all sixty-one divisions, some of which were entirely new units whose student populations had hitherto enjoyed no corporate life, since they lacked common political interests.[1] The Divisions each sent two representatives to the Assembly, from which an executive committee was elected. The Divisional representatives were selected from a divisional executive which consisted of local town or clan representatives. Thus town unions were the building blocks of the new national body.

It may be argued that the effectiveness of the Divisional Unions in raising money and mobilising support for the war effort lay in the fact that its appeal could be couched in kinship terms. Ibos were defined as brothers in relation to outsiders, and as such the obligation to contribute to the war effort was an obligation of kinship. The kinship idiom was seen most clearly at the

1. The figure of 61 was given by a one-time chairman of the Divisional Assembly. It was made up of 58 units in the former Eastern Region, and 3 from the Mid West Ibo areas. Other informants give different figures and there seems to be no direct correspondence between the pre-war and post-war units. Broadly speaking, however, it would seem that the pre-war county councils, several of which made up a division, became divisions during the war. Pre-war divisions became Provinces and ceased to be effective as political and administrative units. There were 30 of these new provinces in Biafra, which had unions in London, most of these quiescent for the duration of the war.
2. £280,000 was collected, according to an informant involved in an audit.

level of local activities. There was good reason for the adoption of the traditional institutional structure of town and clan unions as a basis for unification. Various suggestions had been offered for the systematic collection of money, among them the establishment of local organisations on the basis of London postal districts. This system, its advocates argued, would draw together Biafrans of different ethnic origin. However, it was decided that existing networks based on community of origin provided a readier means of support. They offered established channels of communication and a basis of trust which was deemed essential for the collection of money.

This advantage was perceived clearly enough by actors in the situation. "Town unions," says an informant, "existed as the means by which Divisional Officers reached people and collected their contributions. The reasoning behind this was that individuals would listen to their own presidents and secretaries on the basis of the trust which exists between townspeople. Single girls especially would be more receptive - they tend to snub any man they don't know..." His own division, for instance, sent as one of its two delegates to the Assembly a man from the largest town in the area. "There would have been no point in having a man from one of the small villages because he could not have collected money from the Mbieri townspeople." Qualifications for the job in this case meant the ability to win trust, which meant coming from the same area. "In my town, there is trust over the handling of finances. Resources are not mismanaged and every member had an advance copy of the annual audit. Officers are compelled to 'be serious' with money because the members will carry unfavourable reports back home if they abuse their office..." The trust, in other words, was backed up by the existence of effective sanctions in case of abuse. Townspeople belonged to a single moral community, bound by rules of good conduct which could be enforced by informal social sanctions.

Local communities, the component units os the Divisional Assembly, were for this period the basic units of identification and action in the Ibo community. Town Unions, the formal expression of local interests, had existed before the war and continued to exist as a permanent point of reference long after the larger structure had disappeared. Although there was no place for them in the constitution of the Biafra Union, the local unions participated in its activities on behalf of local interests. Townspeople endeavoured to contribute money and have their contribution publicly acknowledged. Their collective status was considerably enhanced by the announcement that "X town contributed £300". Through the town unions the students had developed a sense of organisation and constitutional procedure which facilitated the rapid construction of organisations at a higher level. Local networks facilitated also the rapid communication and mobilisation of support evident at that time. Messages were conveyed up and down the hierachy with speed and skill.[1]

Town, clan or district unions merit attention as a characteristic feature of Ibo expatriate communities.[2] Their prominence in the war-time activities of Ibos in London, illustrating as it does a characteristic response to external events, calls for special consideration.

Town unions, where they existed, tended to be inactive before the war. Various reasons were given for non-attendance. "I came here to study and the union isn't going to give me my qualifications." "It's just a waste of money and time, there's nothing to gain by joining." "Becoming a union official won't gain status at home; only qualifications count..." were some of the excuses offered by those who stayed away. Like the N.C.N.C. and other political organisations the pre-war unions tended to attract political activists who were sometimes described rather sourly by their less active townspeople as 'failed students', 'people who can't win status any other way', 'people with political ambitions at home' and so on.

1. For an example of formal communication between Divisional Assembly officers and Divisional Union representatives see Appendix II.

2. See Dilim Okafor-Omali(1965); A. Smock(1971); H.Wolpe(1967); W T Morrill(1963); Henderson(1966); C.Moller(1968);C.Okonjo(1967; on the phenomenon of Ibo unions.

During the war the situation changed dramatically, and most local unions could rely on almost full support. (The locality referred to in the term 'local unions' is that of local community of origin in Nigeria). If persuasion was needed the basis of the appeal was that people were far away from home, where there was a war raging, and there was no other way of showing appreciation of the efforts of their kin and by making a contribution to the war effort. Generally, however, persuasion was not needed. Gatherings of local people became vital occasions for the dissemination of information received by letter, and for pooling resources for the common objective of assisting their home communities. Some unions had weekly levies 'for repairs' (ie. to damaged buildings in their hometown. In one union the amount required from each member was £1.50 per week, or £85 per year.) Meetings were regular and well attended. There were duplicated newsletters to acquaint townspeople with the latest situation at home, with activities in London, with executive decisions, with births and deaths. Like some of the Divisional Unions the local unions in many cases grew in 1967-8 out of a new-found common interest.

The intensification of local activities was both formal and informal. Informal networks were activated by increased visiting and communication by telephone. Local people, whether real or quasi-kin, were a source of moral and emotional support, and often rendered financial assistance to each other as well.

For a full understanding of the process of unification, and in particular the mobilisation of local groupings, it is helpful to consider some features of traditional Ibo society.

Traditional Society and Contemporary Unity. Until comparatively recently there was no sense of common identity among the various groups in Eastern Nigeria now known as the Ibo people. According to one writer the concept of

'all the Ibos' was still incomprehensible to most of the villagers in the Eastern region in the 1940s.[1] In the 1940s and 1950s it was said that "the Ibos are a single people in the sense that they speak a number of related dialects, occupy a continuous tract of territory and have many features of social structure and culture in common. But they were not formerly politically unified and there are marked dialectal and cultural differences among the various main groupings."[2] There is no single tradition of origin[3], and the name itself, until recently, was not accepted by all the Ibos as applying to them. Marginal peoples such as the Onitshas and Arochukus, and others like the Nri who had their own tradition of origin, claimed that they were not Ibo. They used the word in a derisory sense to refer to the people of the interior, whom they regarded as less civilised than themselves. In its original meaning 'igbo' implied slave or bush person.[4] "Today, the name is used by the people primarily for the language, secondarily for Ibo-speaking groups other than one's own, but with reference to oneself when speaking to a European."[5]

Traditional Ibo social structure is segmentary, though the segments do not divide with the regularity and predictability or Tiv segments.[6] Neither is the principle of common descent from a single founding ancestor as important in regulating social distance and corporate action. As in Tiv society, Ibo

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1. A. Smock (1971) p. 8.
2. D. Forde and G. I. Jones (1950) p. 9. Also MM Green (1964) p. 5-6.
3. Different communities have their own traditions. For the Nri-Awka people see M.D. Jeffreys (1956); J.R.Horton argues that the Ibos came from Egypt as one of the lost tribes of Israel, a view which is aired by G.Basden(1966). M. Achafusi, in an address to the Historical Society of Nigeria in 1963 suggests that they migrated to East Nigeria from around Lake Chad in the first millenium A.D.
4. V. Uchendu (1965) p.3; M.M.Green (1964)p.6; C.K.Meek (1937)p.9.; Leith-Ross (1965) p.282-3; Forde and Jones (1950) p.11; Early travellers used it to refer to the people of the interior or to all the peoples of the Eastern Region. J.A.Horton (1969), himself the son of an Ibo slave, described 'the empire of the Eboes (Iboes, Igboes or Egboes); the name of the various tribes of Eastern Nigeria who were 'united by a common feeling of Nation' p.172.
5. Forde and Jones (1950) p.11.
6. L. Bohannon (1952).

lineages are traditionally aligned in pairs, each lineage a distinct group only in relation to the other.[1] Collateral lineages of the same branch of a major segment are fused in relation to a more remote collateral branch. The definition and cohesion of social units is relative and can be described only in terms of the wider social structure.

In the segmentary society of yam cultivators described by Equiano, a participant, in the eighteenth century, by travellers and missionaries in the nineteenth century[2] and by government anthropologists in the twentieth[3], the basic social unit was the localized patrilineage, often occupying a single hamlet of scattered homesteads. Its members were subject to the moral authority of the head of the senior branch who held the 'ofo', a staff symbolizing the authority of the ancestors. A number of lineages which sometimes claimed common descent constituted a territorial unit which could be called a village in the sense that there was considerable solidarity based on neighbourhood and that the farmhoods of the various lineages or their subdivision occupied contiguous areas.

The village group, a cluster of villages with ties of common descent, operated as a whole in some respects. The villages shared a common meeting place which was at once a ritual, political and marketing centre, but on the whole managed their own affairs. Beyond the level of village or village group, social interaction was limited. The various village communities were self-contained units which interacted mainly for the purpose of trade and warfare, marriage and ritual.[4] Certain individuals with special skills, doctors priests and diviners, travelled widely, as did the agents of various oracles, the most powerful of which was located at Arochuku.[5] But this movement of individuals did little to break down the social barriers existing between local communities. Indeed, the activities of the agents of the Long Juju of

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1. On the principle of dual division among the Ibos see M.M.Green(1964); G.I.Jones(1949); M.D.Jeffreys(1956); E.W.Ardner(1959).

2. J.A. Horton(1969) 3. C.K.Meek(1937); M.M.Green(1964);S.Leith Ross(1965).

4. A.H. St.John Wood describes the degree of violence in intervillage warfare, relating it to the social distance of the combattants.(1959)

(Cont'd)p.132

Arochuku gave the villagers good reason to be suspicious of strangers.

In short,the units of identification in traditional Ibo society were hierachically arranged. The smallest unit was the village, several of which made a village group or clan. A number of related clans comprised a broad socio-linguistic unit. There were five such units in Iboland.[1] On only one occasion, however, were the component clans of one of these large units conscious of a shared identity, and united for a common purpose. This was the occasion of the Aba Riots of 1929, which spread to include women from most of the Southern Ibo group.[2]

The traditional pattern of identification described so far was reinforced by modern developments. For the traditional units were the basis for administrative divisions adopted by colonial officials. In 1939 Nigeria was divided into eastern, western and northern provinces which in 1946 were grouped, for administrative convenience, into three regions. The Eastern Region consisted of four provinces which corresponded to the main socio-linguistic units.[3] Each province was dicided into Divisions and subdivided into Districts, again corresponding to cultural units. The correspondence was not exact, however, Some clans were divided by divisional boundaries. The broader socio-linguistic units were also divided. Some Eastern Ibo groups were incorporated into Calabar Province which was predominantly non-Ibo. Others became part of Ogoja Province. The groups of Western Ibo who were located on the East of the Niger became part of Onitsha Province, or Owerri Province or the Rivers Province. The latter included some southern Ibo groups as well. The broad distinction between north and south remained, however, with the establishment of two Provinces, Owerri and Onitsha.

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5. (Cont'd from p.131) S. Ottenberg (1958); M.D.Jeffreys (1956).

1. M.M. Green (1936); Forde and Jones(1950). See Appendix III map1.
2. M.Perham(1937); S.O. Esike(1965); Afigbo(1966).
3. See Appendix III map 2,Forde & Jones (1950) give an exhaustive list of cultural units, relating them to administrative division.

The socio-linguistic cleavage between north and south was reinforced by political interests as representative government was gradually introduced in the years leading up to independence.[1] Within the Eastern Region an early and deep-seated division which affected the bulk of the Ibo population was that between Owerri Province and Onitsha Province. Despite successive changes this early configuration of interests is still recalled and is reactivated in certain circumstances, as we shall see.

Thus in the course of time a sense of common identity emerged, born of the expansion of political interests. The process of unification was accelerated by the twin processes of migration and urbanisation. Local discrepancies in culture and dialect were reduced in significance as Ibos came into contact with non-Ibos in the townships of Eastern Nigeria and beyond. Interacting with other migrants in the new townships of the twentieth century, individuals became aware of similarities between themselves and other Igbo-speakers and differences between Igbo speakers and people who did not speak the language. In the growing urban centres dialects were modified to facilitate communication.[2] Early in the century missionaries had tried to develop a common language, called Union Ibo for the purposes of a comprehensible Bible. By the 1930s, a 'natural or spoken Union' was growing up along the main roads and railway.[3]

Despite extensive travel and residence many miles from their hometowns, Ibos retained firm links with their communities of origin. The various accounts of the urban experience of Ibo migrants make two points clear; Individuals from the same home towns were drawn together in the city; and the basis of their association was their community of origin. Ethnic ties were formally

1. In 1951 the MacPherson Constitution introduced the principle of election. Members of the Regional House of Assembly, created in 1946, who had hitherto been nominated, or appointed, were henceforth to be elected. Details are given in K.Post(1963) and J.P.Mackintosh(1966).
2. Considerable modification was required in some cases. According to R.G. Armstrong 'the language is unified to the extent that it expresses certain basic ideas, but several dialects are not mutually intelligible except for such basic ideas.(1967).
3. M.M. Green(1936).

expressed in the existence of town and clan unions. They were manipulated also for the purpose of finding accommodation and jobs, and were manifested in the choice of friends, political associates and marriage partners. The persistence in the settler communities of communal identies based on the place of origin did not prevent the recognition of common interests at a level inclusive of smaller, local units. The shared culture and language, and common political interests as Eastern Region citizens, among Ibos abroad, were expressed in the formation of the Ibo State Union, which was founded on a network of local unions and became the cultural counterpart of the N.C.N.C.

From this digression into the social structure and recent developments of Ibo society two facts stand out as being relevant to the present discussion; that descent provides the basis for political affiliation; and that structural cleavages are segmentary in character. These facts throw light upon the pattern of political unification in London, upon the adoption of local units as the building blocks for a major national organisation, the Divisional Assembly, and on the use of a kinship idiom for the articulation of political interests. Another phenomenon which becomes comprehensible in the light of the foregoing is the cleavage which developed in the Biafra Union towards the end of the war.

Alignments by area had always been the pattern of local politics in the former Eastern Region of Nigeria.[1] Local blocs competed for amenities and political appointments. In London, alignments by area were not in general pronounced at the level of local unions. Towards the end of 1969, however, factions constituted on an area basis began to appear at a national level. By this time the Biafra Union was in considerable disarray which was generally attributed to poor leadership and mismanagement of resources. Accordingly, factions were formed to remove or retain the incumbents in office, who had for some time been drawn mainly from Old Unitsha, The geographical homogeneity

1. K. Post (1963).

of the executive was, in 1969, seen to be significant by Owerri politicians, and rival factions were constituted on a geographical basis. The divisions belonging to Old Owerri Province united against those of Old Onitsha, and in the final election swept the board clear, replacing the predominantly Onitsha executive with an Owerri one.[1]

Old Owerri and Old Onitsha, the two main Ibo provinces of colonial days, were equivalent to primary segments and marked a deep structural cleavage in traditional Ibo society. While this structural and cultural divide was bridged for much of the war in the need for a united front against the outside world, it became the vehicle for the expression of dissatisfaction when internal dissention threatened the Union's continued existence. (The union had, in fact, been virtually suspended by that time, and its leading officials accommodated within the Divisional Assembly which had become the real forum for political contest and debate.) Personal antipathy and the customary use of unflattering stereotypes by Onitshas and Owerris of each other were now broadened to include disloyalty and a lack of commitment to the war effort.[2]

Voluntary Associations and Informal Networks. To an extent the local unions, and national organisations constituted on a local basis, are less interesting than the formal and informal associations which cut across local boundaries. While the former were visible before the war and represented a development of pre-war tendencies, the non-local associations were by and large a novel response to the unique circumstances of the period. There were two levels of

1. See Appendix IV for an analysis of successive executive committees of the Union by area of origin. A prominent Owerri politician says he does not know why the Union executive had been mostly Onitsha men until 1969. On reflection he decided that the Owerri politicians had simply not been interested in the Union.

2. The Onitshas were "the ones who let the side down" by giving way to the Nigerian army (the northern front had been one of the first to fall). After the war they "brought out their sons from hiding (who should have been called up) and produced lorries which had been hidden or dismantled when vehicles were requisitioned." No equivalent was obtained from Onitsha informants.

association on a non-local basis. At one level were the formal organisations which catered for people with special interests or objectives. At the other level were informal networks. These are examined first.

If the need for news and moral support reinforced the solidarity of local groups, it also promoted a new freedom and intimacy with strangers, so long as they were Biafran. A rapid extension of personal contacts seems to have been an almost universal experience. The following comment sums it up. "The war helped to make people more closely knit...it made an Ngwa man feel an Ibo....[1] You could greet an Ibo on the street," This informant got to know a wide range of people, though none of them intimately. For some prople, however, the war gave rise to intimate and lasting friendships. The intimacy extended to dropping in uninvited and helping when in trouble - rights and obligations normally assumed by townspeople. Deep trust developed through working together on committees, and negotiating money matters without mishap. (One informant, as a sign of his intimacy with a fellow committee member, describes with gratification how his friends's wife has his telephone number in her diary, the only man's number recorded there!) Sometimes lasting associations of this sort were initialled in libraries or at bus-stops, when a fellow Biafran was recognised by his appearance, accent, or simply by a Biafran tie or lapel badge.

During the war everyone wanted to know the latest news. The poor coverage given to the crisis in the national news media and the restricted communications with kin and friends in Biafra forced Biafrans in London to rely on reports from abroad ('Le Monde', the 'Jerusalem Post' etc.); on unofficial announcements by journalists, and on people with useful contacts. Biafrans with contacts, were sought after. Some were 'free' (familiar) with Shell executives, others with sympathetic politicians like Lords Soper and Brockway; others had links with soldiers and journalists. There were certain rallying points where information was always available. One was the African

1. Ngwa is a large Ibo clan in the southern section of Iboland.

Continental Bank, which received news by telex, and to which many Biafrans went at least once a week, others daily. The hotels of emissaries became equally important meeting points. Occasionally, religious organisations provided the focal point for gatherings in a particular locality. 'San Marino', an international catholic students' chaplaincy in south London drew several hundred Biafrans for whom it was a centre of formal and informal activity. Rooms were hired there for meetings of various kinds, and use was made of the small library, chapel and social facilities. This institution is mentioned again in the discussion of external boundaries in the latter part of the chapter. Here it may be noted that centres like San Marino facilitated interaction among Ibos who had little in common apart from residence in a particular area of south London. (They were not necessarily Catholic.)

The African Continental Bank, like San Marino, drew a disproportionate number of individuals who had business in the area. The A.C.B. was a constant point of reference for men and women who worked in the City of London and kept office hours. They gathered daily in the foyer exchanging news and views with a regularity which earned them the name 'the A.C.B. Lunch Club' (or, rather, Lunchtime Club, since there was no time on these occasions to consume any lunch, nor were there the facilities to do so.) The club lies midway between the informal networks and formally organised groupings.

The A.C.B. Lunch-time Club was established in 1968 about a year after the outbreak of the war, and lasted until 1970. There were no executive offices but about seven voluntary stewards who obtained photocopies of 'Le Monde' and the 'jerusalem Post' when relevant items appeared. They also organised dances and distributed leaflets.[1] The group sent delegations to MPs, persuaded clergymen to address gatherings, and sent seedlings to Biafra. There existed a Policy Group, again voluntary and fluid in composition, which made decisions and offered suggestions to the Biafra Union and the Representative in London.

1. This account was given by one of the stewards and is unsupported by any other evidence but is believed to be authentic.

No register of members was kept but more than two hundred people were coming regularly and new faces were soon spotted. When it was suspected that the club was being infiltrated by spies (for the Nigerian Government) an inner circle, comprising a hard core of trusted regulars, began to meet and take decisions separately.

The significance of the club lay in its capacity for morale-boosting. People congregated to talk and share news. The emotion expressed after losses and gains on the battle front not infrequently brought requests from the bank staff for less noise! The up-to-date information supplied by telex (which placed the bank director in a strategic position) attracted not only the individual Biafrans working locally but union secretaries who had to travel to the bank for the latest information. In that respect the club provided a forum, also, for inter-organisational exchanges.

The A.C.B. Lunchtime Club was one of a number of non-local associations, more or less formal in character, which proliferated during the war. They were constituted for a variety of purposes. There were professional associations for barristers, doctors, nurses, caterers, insurance brokers, accountants, engineers, management specialists, marketing experts, and probably others; welfare associations such as the Biafra Rehabilitation Committee and the Biafra Welfare International; cultural associations like the Orana Dance Troupe, which gave public performances for money; recreational associations like the Biafra All-Stars (footballers); special interest groups such as the Biafran Parents' Association formed by men and women who wished to bring their children out of Biafra, and various study groups; and a group similar in some ways to the A.C.B. Lunchtime Club which attracted people with financial means, Club Two-fifty. Not all of these associations can be described here. Some will be dealt with in the post-war context where they assume new significance. Four are singled out here for attention: the Biafra Management

Association, as an example of a predominantly male professional group; the Biafran Nurses' Association, as a female professional body; the Biafran Parents' Association, which provides an example of a special interest group; and Club Two-fifty, whose objective was more diffuse and had implications for status differentiation within the community.

The members of the Biafra Management Association, and presumably they were not alone in this, had high hopes of becoming the official national body representing the interests of their profession in Biafra, the equivalent of the British Institute of Management. An elected committee arranged lectures and visiting speakers, excercises and visits to industrial establishments. When the war came to an end, and the association with it, the secretary was on the point of distributing a number of scholarships for further studies in France.

Of immediate benefit to members was the opportunity to maximise their personal resources by the joint application of their common expertise. The chairman and secretary announced the formation of a business association in which everyone interested could participate. A few did so, and some newcomers were attracted to the project, which was launched by twelve individuals. Each member made a monthly contribution, which was to be used for an enterprise run by two members full time, while the rest held shares.

(Although the project did not materialise in the way envisaged, the original purpose was partly realised after the war, when the association's capital was put into individual members' businesses.)

At the end of the war the personnel of the group changed slightly as individuals redefined their interests. The Biafra Management Association as such was discontinued by the will of the majority. They saw no point in continuing as a group, since Biafra, their <u>raison d'etre</u>, no longer existed. Neither did they wish to merge with the Nigerian Management Association, for at that time there seemed to be no future for them in Nigeria, and a sense of emotional

rejection operated against the resumption of relationships. This point will be developed in the context of post-war relationships between Ibos and non-Ibos,

The association brought into interaction a large number of people from diverse backgrounds who otherwise would not have met. It produced firm friendships based on the trust and knowledge derived from working together. Like other associations of its kind, the B.M.A. facilitated the development of diffuse ties between people who at the outbreak of the war did not belong to common organisations or overlapping networks. They were members of a single category; students of management. They became, in the war, a social group with common interests which were promoted in business, educational and social activities. Although the subjective rationale of the association was the members' wish to become the Biafran equivalent of the British Institute of Management, its existence is accounted for primarily by the objective reality of life in London, by the members' need to make a living and the desire to apply their hard-earned professional skills in doing so. (i.e. by forming a business association).

The nurses formed the only predominantly female occupational association. Other women joined mixed groups like the Biafran teachers, lawyers and caterers. As the largest single occupational category among the women, (33% chose nursing as a career[1]), and including some of the best educated and most articulate, it was inevitable that the nurses would organise themselves in this way. Apart from a traditional proclivity for voluntary association and collective action, for which ample historical evidence is afforded,[2]

1. General Introduction p. 33 . This figure consists of students. The total number practising the profession includes wives who trained at home and came to join their husbands. Many also studied midwifery in Britain.

2. On voluntary associations see M.M.Green(1964). Collective action of a different kind was seen in the Aba Riots in 1929, and the various movements which preceded it in the 1920s.

the women, it is said, suffered more intensely than their man by the separation from their kin at home, and were the more anxious to contribute to the war effort.

The nurses directed their energies to fundraising and to supplying nursing assistance in Biafra. The first objective was achieved in a series of spectacular social events. A noteworthy one was the formal dinner and dance held at the Hilton Hotel, for which the tickets were £5 double. The second objective was served by sending two nurses at a time into Biafra at the Association's expense. The candidates were chosen from a list of names which were nominated by the members. The cost of fares and salaries was met from the £3 entrance fees paid by members, and from part of the proceeds of the fundraising events. Finances were handled by a formally elected executive committee.

The Nurses' Association was not the only women's group though it appears to have been the most effective. The other was the Women's Wing of the Biafra Union, which apparently resented the fundraising activities of the nurses. There was no overlapping of official posts between the two organisations, and individual women concentrated their energies on one or the other. One informant, a nurse, spent her time campaigning for office in the women's wing and consequently was inactive in the professional association. The president of the Nurses' Association, ambitious for office in a national political organisation, chose not the Women's Wing but the Biafra Union as her target. She stood for an office in the Union Executive and was supported by the nurses but not, it seems, by the Women's Wing who mocked her efforts to join in the men's activities. The view expressed by some of them that a woman should not attempt to work with the men in this way rested partly on the traditional Ibo belief that men's spheres and women's spheres are separate and complementary. No doubt also it rested on the suspicion that an influential woman in the Union would weaken the influence of the Women's Wing by undermining its role as a necessary outlet for women's energies and spokesman for feminine interests.

It is possible that the Women's Wing leaders resented any move which might eclipse their organisation because it represented for them as individuals the major, and often the only, organised expression of their interests. A look at the social composition of the leadership confirms this point. Although knowledge of this is limited, there is evidence that the leadership consisted of graduates employed in low-level non-professional occupations, and highly trained professional women like teachers; women, in other words, who either had no professional organisation to join or one that was dominated by men. Apart from the Women's Wing they had no institutional outlet, or none that was free from masculine control.

The Biafran Parents' Association was formed early in 1968 by a group of people who wanted to evacuate their children from Biafra. They had found this an expensive task when undertaken individually and decided that the cheapest and most effective way of achieving their aims would be to cooperate by pooling their resources and appealing to charitable organisations for assistance. This strategy attracted about one hundred families to the Association, each of them paying a membership fee of two guineas, and twenty pounds towards the expense of evacuation.

A list of children was drawn up and a charitable organisation agreed to fly them out of Biafra free of charge if they could be brought to a suitable collection point within the war zone. The plan did not materialise, however,. The Biafran authorities claimed, understandably, that the security of the children was their affair. They feared that the evacuation, with its implications of low morale in the country, would be used for propaganda purposes. The use of the charitable organisation would have to be forgone, and the families themselves pay the fares. With its objective thus defeated, the association lost the support of about 80% of its members.

The ten or eleven families left continued with the plan. Theyraised funds and sent two people home to collect twenty-four children. This attempt, too, was doomed to failure, initially because of poor communications between the various authorities, because information was supplied but never received,, because money was paid and not accounted for at various stages in the transaction, and so on. The achievement of the two men delegated for the task also failed to live up to expectations. They came back with only their own children which added further to the demoralization of the association.

The 6 remaining families continued their efforts to raise funds. One of the founder members emerged as the leader of the group. Meetings were held in his house and he conducted negotiationswith the Biafra Office in London. Finally, a man was sent to Biafra and returned safely with all of the children (about fifteen).

The hard core of families who persisted to the end remain a closeknit though informal group. At the time when they met to cooperate in the venture of bringing their children out of Biafra they lived in widely separated parts of London, though all now live south of the river (purely by coincidence, the informant assured). Their original diversity of locality was matched by a diversity in occupation and educational status, and in area of origin in Iboland. Like the associations discussed so far, then, the Biafran Parents' Association facilitated interaction on a new scale, mobilised to meet the special conditions of the war. Like the Biafra Management Association it illustrates a hidden capacity for financial cooperation to achieve common ends between members unrelated by ties of kinship or contiguity.

It is harder to offer a definitive statement of the aims and objectives of Club Two-fifty, since the retrospective accounts of informants are divergent. Members expected, and obtained, different benefits from the group, and non-members' opinions are coloured by their failure or disinclination to gain entry.

Club Two-fifty was launched by a visiting politician, primarily for the purpose of raising money. Nigerian currency had been withdrawn and Biafra, without any hope of obtaining the new money, was desparately in need of foreign currency. The audience was told that wealthy people at home were showing their wealth by forming clubs, admission to which was gained by payment of a sum which went towards the war effort. There was the Hundred Club, the Fifty Club and so on. Biafrans in London were urged to do likewise. Thus the Two-fifty Club was established. Entrants were required to pay an entry fee of one hundred pounds, which went into a fund for Biafra. The Specification of money as the major criterion for membership made the club unique among war-time voluntary associations.

There was no discrimination in recruitment. Membership was open to all who could pay the fee. Occasionally people who could not were accepted if they were well-connected and highly respected, as was a medical man who was persuaded to act as chairman. The club grew in size from about twenty-five at the start to over a hundred when Biafra collapsed. It was a heterogeneous body, including both the uneducated and unskilled, and the highly educated. Examples of the former were people studying for GCE examinations, a plumber, an electrician, and a London Transport worker. In the latter category were academics, medical men and professionals.

The Club's formal activities, which were controlled by a self-appointed executive committee, included fundraising and the discussion of political issues. In the inaugural address founder members were told that Colonel Ojukwu would personally acknowledge the receipt of money. The members would become a war council and would be consulted by any visiting ministers because, through their membership fees, <u>they</u> were paying for the war. By virtue of their influential connections both in Britain and in Biafra, members did, in fact, have frequent contact with visiting politicians and their efforts received a disproportionate

amount of publicity at home. Positive achievements included the sending of salt and other much needed commodities into Biafra. Such was the efficiency of their machinery, in the view of the organisers, that other groups were cordially invited to channel their contributions through Club Two-fifty![1]

The objective discussion of issues was, in the opinion of a leading member, less successful. The reason was the mixed composition of the club, whose illiterate and less well-educated members were unable to argue on the same level as intellectuals like himself. It was this heterogeneity in background, and the fact that financial resources were the sole criterion of admission, that dissuaded many Biafrans from joining, even when they were able to afford it. People who were approached but declined to be associated with Club 250 included most of the general practitioners and academics; a large proportion, in other words, of the intellectual and financial elite. To such people the club represented an elite only in a very limited sense. On account of its blatant materialism and connections with the 'corrupt old politicians' who launched it, Club 250 was to be avoided on principle. The refusal to join can in some cases be traced to personality conflicts and political rivalry between prominent members and potential recruits. Thus the motives for remaining outside Club 250 were complex.

So too, were the reasons for joining. Membership was sought for a variety of reasons, some of which are offered by members themselves, and some, less sympathetic, by people who could not or would no join. For a large proportion it signified membership of an ecomomic and social elite. People who had the money joined, it is said, to be identified with those who had prestige. For some, the elite quality of the membership was nebulous. An informant describes the club as being open to all but adds that all potential members had to be

1. This information was offered by the secretary of an organisation which invited representatives of all the others to coordinate their efforts. The boasts of the Club 250 representative aroused not a little resentment!

screened to avoid the admission of 'rogues' and 'pretentious people who were not really gentlemen'. (This informant was a man who had made considerable financial sacrifices to join and relied heavily on such diffuse qualities as these to distinguish himself from other, wealthier men.) Another recalls nostalgically the qualities which had made Club Two-fifty such an enjoyable and worthwhile experience: "Club Two-fifty was what was needed to distinguish the elite from the mob. I joined, naturally....People could talk unemotionally, face issues squarely, even contemplate defeat....People made new friends...we expected certain standards of hospitality from each other (i.e. expensive drinks - 'whisky and Martell brandy')." By comparison with the Biafra Union which was, for this informant, "a refuge for the riff-raff, a collection of the helpless," the club was an elite gathering. It could only contain a serious-minded elite, since it was so expensive to join!

Other members received different returns on their investment. They did not necessarily acquire new friends. The experience of one high-ranking informant was that friends made before the war remained friends, while fellow members who had not been friends to begin with were easily lost from sight when the war ended. If this experience was general it would seem that the club did not produce a close-knit and interacting elite of any duration, though its members were frequently linked by informal interaction, visiting and party-giving in particular. It would seem that the less prestigious members had most to gain in this respect. Useful ties were established also by the more influential members, the evidence being a number of business associations which developed within the confines of Club Two-fifty and persisted after the war.

It is difficult, and unwise, to attempt an analysis of social stratification in the community on the basis of such slender evidence. Although there are status implications in the existence of such an organisation, divergences of opinion about its character and function, together with the heterogeneous

composition of its membership and the absence, in structural terms, of a clear dividing line between members and non-members, produce only an indistinct impression of status differentiation.

An analysis of structural cleavages based on socio-economic status is attempted for the post-war period, for which the evidence is more plentiful. Attention in the present chapter must of necessity be confined to other configurations of interests, of which locality is the most significant. In respect of the factor of locality change has been observed in two directions: the intensification of interaction within local groups, and the expansion of individual networks beyond the confines of local groups. The latter phenomenon has taken two forms: extension of the unit of identification and action along lines of traditional socio-cultural units (e.g. the Divisional Assembly), and the development of voluntary associations and informal networks cutting across local boundaries altogether.

Attention may be turned now to an aspect of interaction which confirms these trends. Marriage norms and practice in the war years acquired a new character which reflected the changed circumstances of the Ibos in London.

Heterosexual Relationships: the Choice of a Spouse. The comments of two male informants offer an insight into the situation as it was perceived by participants, and provide a useful starting point for discussion:

> "There were many more marriages in 1968 and 1969 because people realised that the war was going to go on. Girls were scarce and no new ones were coming, and people married anyone. There was no writing home to investigate their backgrounds or ask permission from parents because of the breakdown in communications...There were not many marriages before the war because most boys were studying and couldn't afford families. They planned to marry when they got home...."

"The customary considerations in the choice of a partner are to do with background. Is the family a good one? Is the parents' marriage stable? Are the sisters good wives? In London there is nobody to dictate the choice. People in London have accepted the way of life here....mind your own business attitude. During the war marriages were rushed into without investigation. There were many marriages between towns, ethnic groups, nationalities and races, for several reasons. There was no-one around to say no; the mind your own business attitude; and men decided not to wait till going home, which would have meant postponing their marriages indefinitely...."

Two points stand out in these comments. The rate of marriage was seen to rise; and people married 'anyone'. The first point suggests that an event which was normally postponed until it could take place in Nigeria began to take place in London. Hence new procedures had to evolve in dealing with it. The second point indicates a changing basis of mate selection. People no longer married within the conventional circle of eligible spouses but chose 'anyone'. In other words, traditional boundaries were crossed. Several questions are prompted by these suppositions, concerning the actual rate of marriage and the procedures evolved to deal with any real or imagined increase. Questions arise as to the traditional criteria in mate selection, the way in which they changed at this time, and the significance of the changes.

In the discussion which follows, the traditional criteria of locality and religious affiliation are seen to change in a direction consistent with changes in the political sphere. Some internal boundaries were crossed in accordance with the sense of unity borne of the crisis. Others, like the caste barrier, were crossed in ignorance, since the new procedures omitted the customary investigation of background. The pattern of mate selection is explained by changing norms - personal preference and external pressures - and new opportunities for interaction with individuals outside the traditional circle of eligible spouses.

First, however, attention must be given to the supposed increase in the incidence and rate of marriage. If it can be assumed that the number of bachelors and spinsters remained more or less constant from the early sixties to the end of the war[1] it appears that people were three times more likely to marry in the latter period than in the earlier. In the marriage sample, only 10% (32) couples met and married in Britain before 1966. A further 28% (90) married between 1966 and 1969. (Of this number about 50 met and married in Britain during the war, i.e. 1967-69) The reasons why people married when they did have been indicated briefly already. The students who were not engaged on arrival to women who joined them shortly afterwards, intended to complete their course of study and return home still single. Men who were detained abroad by the war and had reached a marriageable age (late twenties) were not willing to postpone marriage indefinitely by waiting for the war to end. Others who had fiancees at home not infrequently met and married other women when contact with home was lost, or when it was learned that the fiancee had married a soldier, or when the financial and political problems of bringing her to England seemed insurmountable.

The desire to marry was intensified by the emotional pressures of the war. For some people the need for emotional and moral support prompted suicide attempts. For others it led in the direction of marriage. The financial factor was also significant. Before the war, when students were dependent on their kin, marriage was discouraged for the extra burden it placed on the parents. Not only would they have to support their son, but his wife and children as well. When financial supplies were cut off, so too was this reason for remaining single. In addition, a wife could perhaps take the parents' place as a source of financial support.

1. Until 1966 the departing students were replaced by new arrivals. After 1966 the rate of arrivals and departures dropped sharply but still cancelled out. The loss of Biafrans to Europe and America (and a few to Biafra) was balanced by the gain of Biafrans from the same places.

An important factor, according to informants, was the rapidly dwindling supply of eligible Ibo women. For a man who wanted an Ibo wife and could not wait until the end of the war to go and find one at home, a choice had to be made quickly before all the unattached girls were married. In these circumstances several girls, it is said, made better marriages than they would otherwise have done.

The criteria of eligibility were not uniform for the whole population. The comment that 'people married anyone' suggests that the criteria changed for those who embarked on marriages which crossed particular social boundaries. Other people preferred to wait until customary requirements could be satisfied after the war. To assess the accuracy of the statement that 'people married anyone' it is necessary to consider first the traditional criteria in mate selection (traditional both in the sense of customary and including innovations before 1966) and to estimate the extent to which couples marrying in the war deviated from them.

Two sets of factors - structural and non-structural - enter into the choice of a spouse in traditional marriages. (Since the variables considered here affect marriage strategy in varying degrees at the present time also they are described in the ethnographic present tense.) Structural factors include caste and socio-economic status, religious affiliation and locality. Non-structural factors include physical, moral and psychological characteristics in the background of the potential spouse, such as disease and infertility, theft and promiscuity, and existing ties of consanguinity between the parties to the alliance. The non-structural factors, which do not mark social boundaries, are of less interest here than the structural factors, particularly that of locality, which do. The former, however, are relevant to the extent that certain customary investigations were ommitted during the war, and 'undesirable' marriages contracted as a result.

The background of a potential spouse is traditionally the subject of a thorough investigation, of which the object is to ensure that he or she is free of certain stigma, and in no way related already to the family of the bride or groom. To have sexual relations with a kinsman is regarded as an abomination. A scandal arose recently over an alleged incident between matrilateral first cousins, who were living in the same house in London. A wedding, similarly, was stopped at the last moment because the bride's mother thought that the groom was related to her through his mother. However, it was allowed to proceed when the groom proved that it was not he but his half-brother who was related to the mother of the bride. The degree of kinship within which marriage is prohibited varies from place to place in Iboland. In some areas it is calculated in terms of physical distance, everyone living within a mile of each other being regarded as kin.

Other physical characteristics to be avoided are hereditary diseases such as leprosy, epilepsy or insanity, unexplained or early deaths, and infertility. Families with a history of witchcraft (restricted to Onitsha town and Western Iboland) or which have been cursed are equally unacceptable. These characteristics account for several first choices which were abandoned when investigations exposed the stigma, or far-sighted parents put an end to a developing relationship before it reached that stage. A young man was involved with a local girl in 1958 and wanted to marry her. His mother knew of the affair and told her own mother, who summoned the boy and asked his intentions regarding the girl. Then she began totrace an illness in the girl's family, as far back as four generations. "She didn't say I could not marry her," the man said in an interview, "but by that time I didn't want to, and would not have started the affair at all if I had known." In 1962 a nurse at Ibadan hospital was interested in a medical student who wanted to marry her. She mentioned it to a cousin who had attended

the same boarding school as the suitor's brother. From him she learned that her family would oppose the match. The boy's father had been involved in a bad business deal with a man who had thereupon cursed him and his family. There were mysterious deaths, then the curse was revoked. But marriage would still be out of the question.

The marriage the girl eventually made illustrates the importance of another of the physical characteristics mentioned above: infertility. A women whose female kin tend to be infertile is regarded as potentially infertile herself. Similarly, a background of fecundity is a recommendation for marriage. The nurse in question was acceptable to her eventual husband's people because, she said, "his people had married from my family before (i.e. had married a girl from her village, about two generations ago) and so already regarded us as in-laws. The women had been a good wife, and had had three brilliant children, so they were glad to marry me as well..."

A second set of characteristics in the background of the potential spouse are social and psychological . Evidence is sought of theft and prostitution, sexual incontinence and marital instability. A young man was interested in a local girl and told his father, who pointed out that the girl's grandmother had been unable to form stable relationships and her mother also had remarried after a dowry had been paid by someone else.[1] Not only was this an ill omen for the girl's own stability but the violation of an existing marriage tie by her mother had created ill-feeling between her family and the first husband's people. A background of marital stability, on the other hand, is a qualification for an intending wife.

A woman whose marriage breaks up causes shame to her parents, particularly to her mother, and jeopardises her junior sisters' chances of good marriages. (There are cases of breakdown in London where the mother's shame is used by men as an instrument of moral blackmail to keep the matter out of court, where the decision might favour the wife.) A mother is held accountable for her daughter's

1. Marriage payment by groom's family to bride's, described as 'dowry' by Ibos.

conduct, particularly in respect of sexual morals. The conduct not only of her closest relatives but of all the women in the compound have a bearing on a girl's reputation and can affect her chances adversely.

The reputation of the family in this respect is more important for women than for men. Character and conduct are frequently given as the primary considerations in the choice of a wife. The personal characteristics sought in a wife may be discussed in the context of family background, for the Ibos regard the former as entirely dependent on the latter. In the traditional view, character and conduct are one of the major considerations because a good wife is a well-behaved wife. 'Well-behaved' means largely the ability to perform the tasks associated with the clearly defined role of daughter, sister and wife. The good wife is submissive and industrious, and knows her place. She is quiet, not in the sense that she remains silent, but that she gives no cause for gossip which might lower the family's reputation. Above all she is faithful. On the basis of her antecedents a girl's character can be predicted.

During the war, marriages were contracted between individuals who would have been unlikely to marry in other circumstances. They involved women who had been married or had children previously, facts of which their husbands were ignorant. Women, equally, entered into marriages with men whose backgrounds, had they been known, would have disqualified them. Such barriers were crossed not only in ignorance, however. Occasionally the stigma of illegitimate births or undesirable antecedents were deemed unimportant.

The consequences of such matches will be seen later in a discussion of the post-war situation. Sometimes their fate became apparent even before the war ended, as facts came to light, or attraction faded. Before examining these consequences, or considering the changing norms which made such marriages possible during the war years, the second set of factors must be examined. The structural variables of locality, religion and caste are considered in that order.

When asked where he comes from, an individual invariably gives the name of his ancestral home, the village where he and male members of his patrilineage have their land. This is his place of origin as opposed to his place of birth, which may well have been one of the townships of Eastern Nigeria or beyond.

Preference for partners from a particular area and avoidance of others is customary and continues to influence marital choice. To marry outside a group of traditionally intermarrying communities is to marry a foreigner, and the further one goes outside the circle the greater is family resistance to the match. The smallest endogamous unit is the large village whose members do not trace descent from a single ancestor. The largest within Ibo land is traditionally Old Onitsha, or Old Owerri, or Western Iboland, the cleavage between Western Iboland and the others being marked by the River Niger. As far as marriage is concerned, therefore, there are three sets of boundaries defining the limits of marital choice. The first surrounds the group of intermarrying villages or village groups which occupy a continuous tract of territory and have economic, religious and kinship ties. The next level of inclusiveness is coterminnous with Old Owerri, Old Onitsha or Western Iboland. The ultimate barrier is that which divides Igbo-speaking people from their non-Igbo speaking neighbours. The first two divisions - between local communities and between the larger segments of Iboland, will be considered in turn. The third division, between Ibos and non-Ibos, is dealt with in the second half of the chapter.

Numerous examples may be given of intermarrying villages and towns.[1] Inyi, Achi and Awlaw are local communities three or four miles apart whose residents intermarry, hold joint festivals and so on. Other groups are larger, with as many as ten towns, and frequently, like the previous example, lie on both sides of an administrative boundary. Within such communities the movement of women may

1. All the facts produced here have been obtained from informants in London as being relevant to their own situation.

be reciprocal but often it is said that "we marry from them but they don't marry from us", meaning that wives are taken by one side only. Several towns on the margins of Iboland, possessing their own traditions of origin and sometimes distinctive features of social organisation, have traditions of endogamy which are particularly strong in the case of women. Onitsha, with its distinctive form of government, Abariba, which is traditionally matrilineal in organisation, and Arochukwu, with its history of migration and conquest, are examples of these. Resistance to outmarriage is reinforced by derogatory stereotypes of outsiders, and favourable self-images. Thus it is said that women of X town are promiscuous and men of Y beat their wives. People of Onitsha town on the Niger regard their immediate neighbours in the hinterland as uncivilised ('igbo') by virtue of their more recent contact with Europeans, their traditionally high brideprice ('they sell their women') and their meanness ('they make their women work for them on the farm; we let ours trade'). The hinterland people, on the other hand, regard their neighbours with equal scorn. Onitsha women are thought to be vain, workshy, flighty and indiscrete. The women of one's own town, on the other hand, are regarded as ideal wives, quiet, submissive, faithful and hardworking.

A local marriage is regarded as preferable for a number of reasons. Geographical proximity of potential affines makes the task of investigating their background easier before the marriage takes place. They are likely to be well-known already, and then the enquiry is merely a formality. After the marriage customary links can be easily maintained. The two families expect to celebrate festivals together - New Yam, Christmas and Easter, and have easy access to each other's homes. The couple, too, require easy access to each other's kin for the purpose of settling marital disputes. Marital stability, indeed, is frequently given as the most important reason for marrying locally. For a man there are political advantages to be gained in a local match. Not only will his own people reject him if he is 'too proud to marry one of us', but he loses

the potential support of his affines and their friends. For a woman it is a matter of security and status. Her husband's family are unlikely to abuse her if they know her people, and the latter are close at hand.

A local match is said to be particularly important for first sons who will eventually succeed their fathers as heads of the extended family. When the family concerned has wealth and influence it is felt to be doubly important, for an appropriate union will reinforce family status by creating new alliances and strengthening existing ones.

The majority of people do, in fact, marry locally. Traditional preferences are reflected in marriages of individuals in London from nine local communities. (Abariba, traditionally matrilineal, provides a significant exception).

TABLE 2.1. Propinquity of married couples from nine Ibo communities. (Source: Community leaders.)

Husband's town or clan.	Wife's town or clan				TOTAL
	Same town, clan or intermarrying group	Neighbouring Community	Distant Community	Non-Ibo	TOTAL
Etiti	6	10	-	-	16
Abariba	1	12	-	-	13
Emekuku	5	5	-	4	14
Oguta	6	-	-	-	6
Mbieri	12	7	5	2	26
Awka	20	11	3	1	35
Adazi	3	3	2	1	9
Obosi	15	6	-	-	21
Oboro	16	-	3	3	22
TOTAL	84(52%)	54(34%)	13(8%)	11(6%)	162(100%)

Married women from these towns, similarly, reflect the tendency to marry from the same or neighbouring community. Thus three of the eight Emekuku women are married to Emekuku men and the remaining five to men from neighbouring towns in Old Owerri. Of the thirteen married women from Mbieri town, eight are married to Mbieri men, Husbands of the remaining five come from surrounding districts in the same cultural area of Old Owerri.

or those who married outside the traditionally defined intermarrying group the tendency is to remain within the boundary of the larger cultural unit. In the past the line between Owerri and Onitsha constituted a definite barrier. Traditional avoidance of partners from Old Owerri by people of Old Onitsha and of Western Ibo by Eastern Ibo is still forcefully expressed, again in terms of derogatory stereotypes and actual patterns of marriage. It is sometimes said by Western Ibos that 'the Ibos' (ie.Eastern Ibos) are 'mean and narrow-minded, and would not know how to look after our women properly'. The gulf between Owerri and Onitsha Ibos is equally sharply defined, as the following statement suggests: "We Owerris don't like Onitshas. We don't understand them. The Onitshas are selfish, even among themselves. They live individually, not communally like the Owerris. They are spiteful in competition, will amass wealth by deceit. They are proud. They will ask for help on the basis of being Ibo like you but when your back is turned they will rob you, seduce your wife and be proud of it."[11]

A less clearly defined, but equally derogatory, view is held of Northerners by Southern and Western Ibos which is similar to the distinction drawn by Onitsha town people between themselves and the 'Igbo' hinterland. Northern Iboland was the last area to be penetrated by European missionaries, and thus to receive Western education. As a consequence of this the northern Ibos are looked down upon by their more 'civilised' neighbours as 'wa-wa', a judgement which enters into the choice of a partner in marriage.

In terms of these three broad culture areas, 74% of the Ibo marriages in London are endogamous.

TABLE 2.2. Socio-cultural origin of Married Couples. (Source: Marriage Sample).

Husband's origin	Wife's origin						TOTAL
	Onitsha	Owerri	Western Ibo	Other Nigerian	Other Black	White	TOTAL
Onitsha	92	13	4	1	6	4	120
Owerri	7	140	3	5	13	11	179
Western Ibo	1	3	15	3	2	2	26
Other Nigerian	-	3	2	-	-	-	5
Other Black	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
White	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
TOTAL	101	161	24	9	21	17	333

Men marry out more frequently than women:

TABLE 2.3. Socio-cultural origin and Rate of Outmarriages, by sex. (Source: Marriage Sample.)

Socio-cultural Origin	% endogamous		% other Ibo		% non-Ibo	
	women	men	women	men	women	men
Onitsha	92%	77%	7%	14%	1%	9%
Owerri	87%	78%	10%	6%	3%	16%
Western Ibo	63%	16%	29%	15%	8%	26%

Thus most Onitsha women (92%) are married to Onitsha men. A small minority - 7% - are married to Owerri or Western Ibos. Only 1% are married to non-Ibos.

When the patterns of intermarriage are considered in the light of other factors, such as the time and place of marriage, an interesting tendency emerges. Marriages across the Onitsha-Owerri boundary are seen to be almost entirely a war and post-war phenomenon. This statement is born out by the following figure relating physical distance of spouses' hometowns and year of marriage. Categories based on physical distance are somewhat arbitrary obscuring as they do the fact that some neighbouring communities have traditions of intermarriage while others in equally close proximity have no affinal links.

TABLE 2.4. Physical distance between the hometown of married couples, by year of marriage. (Source: Marriage Sample.)

Distance	1966		1966-9		1970-2		D.K.		TOTAL	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
0-3miles	85	47	22	24	22	40	4	48	133	40
4-10 "	40	23	19	21	10	18	1	13	70	21
11-20 "	17	10	10	11	6	11	-	-	33	10
21-50 "	12	7	15	16	5	9	1	13	14	4
51-100"	3	2	9	10	1	2	1	13	33	10
101+ "	14	8	15	16	10	18	-	-	39	12
D.K.	6	3	3	2	1	2	1	13	11	3
TOTAL	177	100%	93	100%	55	100%	8	100%	333	100%

A regrouping into larger units shows the trend more clearly:

Distance	1966	1966-9	1970-2	TOTAL
	%	%	%	%
Near 0-10miles	70%	44%	58%	61%
Intermediate 11-50miles	17%	27%	20%	20%
Far 51+	10%	26%	20%	16%

With the exception of the war years, over half of the marriages in a particular period have involved couples from the same or neighbouring localities. The proportion involving partners from widely separate areas rose sharply in 1966-9 and remained high in the post-war period.

These figures suggest that geographical proximity became less significant in marital choice during the war period than it had been previously. The tendency to cross traditional socio-cultural boundaries, and in particular that between Onitsha, Owerri and Western Iboland will be explained shortly in terms of changing norms and opportunities for interaction. Two other structural factors remain to be described here: religious affiliation and caste.

According to informants, inter-faith marriages are a war-time and post-war phenomenon, although there is unfortunately little objective evidence to support this view. Information concerning religious affiliation was obtained for only half of the census population and of the marriage sample. In this group as many pre-war as post-war marriages were encountered between individuals of different Christian denominations.

TABLE 2.5. Religious Affiliation of husband and wife by Year of Marriage. (Source: Marriage Sample).

	1966	1966-9	1970-2	Not known	TOTAL
Different	6	5	1	-	12
Same	112	63	42	4	221
Not known	59	25	12	4	100
TOTAL	117	93	55	8	333

The high proportion (one third) of couples for whom the information is not available probably obscures significant differences in the early and later marriages. Fár the figures do not reveal the rising rate of interfaith marriages which are said to have occurred. Despite the findings indicated above, it is worth examining the factor of religion in view of the subjective importance attached to it as a traditional criterion in marital choice, and in view of the implication for unity in the supposed trend towards intermarriage.

In Nigeria, before the war, there was considerable rivalry between local communities of Protestants and Roman Catholics. The first response of the Ibos to missionary preachings had been one of respectful indifference.[1] Between 1900 - 1915 however, a mass movement towards christianity could be observed, largely as a result of colonialism. The power of the white administrators who followed the missionaries helped to recommend the western religion to potential converts. The Ibos were responsive to missionary teachings because they recognised the social advantages of education to the individual, and of a school or hospital to the town. The activities of the missions were characterised by intense interdenominational rivalry. A policy of territorial expansionism was accompanied by mutual exclusiveness. The missions strove for prior possession, and provided what was demanded in order to beat their rivals. The Ibos demanded education, and consequently the Roman Catholic missionaries, who adapted more quickly to this demand, gradually dominated

1. F.E.Ekechi(1970). See also J.Munonye(1966), a novel which graphically portrays the advent of christianity in a particular village.

the region. In 1899 they were running seven schools with a total of 334 children. By 1906 the figure had risen to 24 schools with an enrolment of 2,591 children. (That the Catholics dominated in Iboland before the war is born out by the Census conducted in the field, according to which approximately 60% of Ibos in London are Catholic, and 28% Protestant.)

Interdenominational rivalry by the missionaries had a different significance for their congregations. It can be argued that religion was adopted by the Ibo villagers as a convenient expression of local rivalries which had existed long before the advent of christianity. The institutionalised competition between local communities observed by students of traditional Ibo society[1] assumed religious overtones when the missionaries arrived. Thus membership of a particular community of believers had other than spiritual implications. It imposed restrictions on behaviour in general. According to Ibo informants, the two groups avoided each other's compounds and public events; children were refused education at the local school if they happened to belong to the wrong denomination; above all, there were restrictions on intermarriage. An Anglican informant who married a Roman Catholic in London shortly after the war asys that she would not have dared to do so before 1967. But since that time several girls of her acquaintance have made interfaith marriages. She knows of five Protestant girls who have married Catholics in London and two Catholics who have married Protestants. She herself is the daughter of an Anglican minister, and like her Catholic husband, had attended a mission school and been brought up to attend church regularly. Her father did not, however, oppose her marriage because, she said, her mother too had been a Catholic! It is not proposed here to analyse the cause of intermarriage. The informant's account of her father's reaction is included at this point to emphasise tha fact that such marriages did occur before the war, though they may not, perhaps, have been so prevalent, or as acceptable, as they are now.

1. M.M.Green (1964); G.I.Jones (1949).

The reasons for the growing acceptability, and diminishing antagonism towards interfaith marriages, are offered after a consideration of a third major structural factor in marital choice: caste.

The family's main purpose in investigating the background of the potential spouse before marriage is to establish his or her freeborn status. Marriage between freeborn and slave (Osu - cult slave; Oru or Ohu - domestic slave) must be avoided at all costs.[1]

The present day Osu are descendents of cult slaves who were originally dedicated to the service of local deities in the southern part of Iboland (Owerri). They lived apart from the rest of the community and all contact was ritually proscribed. Marriage was the most extreme of a series of avoidance situations, violation of which resulted in the outcasting of the freeborn partner and the offspring of the union, and ridicule for his kin. Osu were not economically underprivileged. On the contrary, in many cases they amassed considerable wealth in land and property, and were among the first to acquire western education and 'white man's work'.

In the 1950s the Azikiwe government created legislation to ban the use of the term Osu in public. Markets were integrated and Osu children attended school with freeborn. But social discrimination in every respect was still strong in the 1950s and 1960s when the Ibos now in London were at home. An informant describes how his cousin, who was learning to be a tailor, lent his sewing machine to an Osu girl for an hour or two. The boy's father noticed what was going on and later flogged the boy severely before breaking up the machine and throwing it away. Another describes an incident at his boarding school between an Osu teacher and a freeborn pupil. The boy received a beating then publicly declared that he had never heard of an Osu touching a freeborn in that manner. The teacher's loss of confidence at this exposure was such that he had to be transferred to another town.

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1. On the slavery system in Iboland see S.Leith Ross(1937); R.Horton(1954); J.I.Harris(1942).

It is difficult to say how many Osus there are in London at the present time, or to estimate the importance of the system in any sphere outside marriage. The subject is treated with great caution, and where it is raised at all by informants it is referred to delicately as 'our caste system', 'a quaint superstition in our place', as far as possible avoiding the actual use of the word. To raise the matter unsuspectingly with an Osu would cause embarrassment and the immediate termination of relations. The word can be used freely only in freeborn company. It is occasionally a back-handed compliment: "She is so beautiful, is she an Osu?" or a demand for respect:"Don't treat me like that, I'm not an Osu". But in general the subject is forbidden. Accusations of Osu status are sometimes used to annoy and humiliate one's enemies. During the war a breach was caused when one woman called another 'Osu'during an argument. News of the incident spread rapidly to people not directly connected with the pair. It was thought remarkable that the woman should have used the expression in Britain, and that she made the accusation without being able to prove that her opponent was, in fact, an Osu.

Interaction is greater in Britain than it would be at home, for several reasons. In the first place, a person's osu status is known only to others from the immediate locality in Iboland. But even when it is known, the distance from home creates a community of interest which overrides traditional inhibitions and facilitates relationships which would be difficult to sustain at home. Common standards of civility call for politeness in dealings with Osus. They are entertained as guests without fear of pollution or loss of status, and may become close friends. An informant described his reaction on learning, by chance, that his best friend was an Osu. "It didn't make any difference to our friendship, in fact I admired him for having the courage to tell me. But things will have to change when we go home, or the ordinary people will say I am trying to make the gods angry with us, and they won't support me (in local politics.)"

Political discrimination exists to the extent that an Osu sould not stand for president of his local union, and would be unlikely to be elected if he did. An Osu was invited to form a local union during the war by officials of a central political organisation. His period of office lasted for only three weeks, however, when an election was held and he was outvoted. Others,however, successfully hold less important posts such as social secretary and treasurer.

Economically Osus are indistinguishable from the rest of the population. There are doctors, engineers and other professional men. But wealth and education do not, it seems, cancel the effects of Osu status as far as marriage is concerned.

There are, it is said, about 30 Osus in London, and probably fewer Orus. About a dozen of them were directly encountered in the course of fieldwork. Despite their small numbers the system is undoubtedly one of the most significant factors in marital choice. Almost without exception people say that they would not knowingly marry a person of slave descent. In some cases they would not even be intimate with freeborn girls who had been 'crossed' by Osus. Others have Osu girlfriends but would not contemplate marriage. Involvement with an Osu is avoided for the shame and ridicule it would bring to the parents of the freeborn partner, who would no longer be able to hold their heads up in public. They would lose the cooperation of influential friends and their chance of making future alliances would be severely curtailed. The offending son could not bring his Osu wife back to his village to live. If he married an Oru (domestic slave) in Onitsha his sons would be precluded from ceremonial office (a distinctive feature of Onitsha town). A wealthy man, it is said, might marry an Osu girl without serious harm to himself, but his wife would suffer. The following account indicates the strength of feeling on the matter and the anticipated consequences of disregarding it.

"Young educated people think that people should marry if they're in love. Being in love overrules all family objections except Osu status. A girl could never go and tell her parents, 'I'm engaged', because there groups called untouchables, a bit of superstition. A couple must let their parents know their intention so that they can investigate the background to ensure that the partner comes from a good family.

"If my parents had told me that my husband was Osu I would not have married him, but that's the only reason. Why? Because we like to live together, and so I must maintain the link between myself and my parents. If the marriage didn't work out, what would I do? I couldn't go home to them. It might well not work out, because I couldn't say anything to my husband without being misunderstood. He would think I was looking down on him because he was Osu.

"A man of good position might marry an Osu girl and get away with it. If he is wealthy and supporting his family only his parents would tell him directly that he was bad. The rest, who want favours, would say nothing. But they would make the girl's life hell."

Some people say that although they themselves would not marry across the boundary their children may. Others make strenuous efforts to keep alive in their children the knowledge of the system and fear of the consequences of violating it. Mrs. A, a Haematologist, has a close friend who is an Osu, and their children are growing up together. The friend continually hints that their children may marry one day. "In the end," said Mrs. A, "I had to tell her firmly that it was quite impossible."

Some people yield reluctantly to pressures and break off attachments with people of slave descent. This accounts for several first choices in the London population, some of whom remain unmarried today because they can find no-one acceptable to their people. Such a person is Anthony whose case is produced below.

Anthony's father had great prestige in his home town in the north of Iboland. He was the senior man of the senior lineage. He settled local disputes and acted as a trustee for townspeople. The Ohus lived in a separate quarter in the town. They specialised in potmaking, and traditionally did not mix, use the same market or intermarry with the rest

of the population. There was a hysterical outcry if they were confronted in the market, and sometimes they were beaten up.

Anthony's father wanted the Ohus to be integrated and after much local opposition established in 1948 a common market. He had always counted Ohus among his personal friends. One family, the father a forestry officer, were particularly intimate, and the two families used to take their holidays together.

In 1970 Anthony, a student in London, wanted to marry the daughter of the family. But when he wrote home to his elder brother (his father had died ten years previously) he met with strong disapproval. Letters came from several friends as well as his brother, warning him of the danger of the proposed marriage. A doctor, in particular, wrote that he too "had wanted to marry the girl, but..." and is still unmarried because he cannot find anyone suitable. Finally the girl herself wrote to tell Anthony that she did not think they would be happy together, and the plan was abandoned.

During the war when communication was difficult, backgrounds were not always investigated. People had to rely on the knowledge of friends and acquaintances in London, who were quick to inform them of such stigma. Sometimes they found out directly, by means of jokes and riddles, whether or not the prospective partner was 'contaminated'.

But intermarriage did take place, and not always in ignorance of the Osu partner's status. In two known cases Osu girls married men from areas remote from their own, and where the stigma was not so pronounced. In several cases Osus have married outside the group entirely. The men marry West Indians, Europeans and Black Americans. Only one of the six Osu-freeborn marriages encountered in the course of fieldwork is stable. Others are disrupted by quarrels and temporary separations which townspeople observe wrily and do little to prevent.

Having established the major traditional criteria in mate selection and noted that certain changes occurred after 1966, we may ask why this was so. The significance of the changes in the light of external events, and the extent to which marriage norms and practice can be seen as a response to

political, economic and legal circumstances, or as changing concommitantly with patterns of interaction in the political sphere, are the next questions for consideration.

Several explanations forthe pattern of mate selection have been offered in recent sociological studies. The objective of such studies has been to account for the pattern of homogamy or assortative mating, the tendency for marital partners to come from similar social categories. In the present discussion the categories themselves have been taken as problematic. The question has been not simply why like marries like but what the criteria of similarity and dissimilarity are to beginwith. The aim has been to establish the relevant homogamy variables as a preliminary to asking whether any change occurred in the war period and if so, why. Nevertheless, the framework of explanation developed in respect of homogamy is useful for the present purposes.

Following Burgess and Locke, Kerckhoff and others,[1] two types of explanation are offered for the pattern of mate selection in the Ibo community. The first type views mate selection as a function of opportunities. Factors include residential proximity or segregation, demographic characteristics, and activity patterns which limit or promote a person's range of contacts. The shortage of marriageable women, the heightened interaction with other Biafrans and the pattern of mass political meetings are seen as relevant here. The second type of explanation is normative. Mate selection is seen as a result of individual preferences and external pressures in the form of social sanctions which enforce homogamous choices or impose new standards of eligibility. Included in this category are the ideological emphasis on Biafran unity, and the individualistic values promoted by residence abroad and financial independence from kin.

1. Burgess and Locke(1953); Kerckhoff(1970).

In the U.K. the students encounter an atmosphere which is not conducive to local particularism. They are involved in educational and, since 1966, economic activities in the host society and are by and large physically dispersed. They are relatively free from normative constraints excercised by the home people and by fellow Ibos, and acquire new expectations of marriage and conjugal roles. Individuals most affected by the environment are perhaps the students subjected to the universalistic influences of higher education. The change in ideology is evident in the tendency to marry a partner of equal education and similar age. Homogamy in respect of educational background is more apparent in marriages contracted in Britain than in Nigeria. Almost two-thirds of Ibo marriages contracted in Britain are between people of the same or similar educational level, reflecting perhaps increasing emphasis on intellectual and emotional compatibility at the expense of ascribed characteristics such as place of origin. In general, the distance from home reduces the barriers between Ibos from Owerri, Onitsha and Western Iboland. Until the war, however, marriage across these boundaries, though not to non-Ibos, was exceptional. During the war the emphasis on unity made such marriages acceptable if not commonplace. The change in ideology is reflected in the feeling voiced by informants that the rate of intermarriage between Onitshas and Owerris increased dramatically after 1967. It was widely accepted, during the war, that 'any Ibo' would be suitable.

The diminishing significance of internal boundaries of this sort, based on socio-cultural, political and administrative divisions, was paralleled by the attitude towards marriage across religious boundaries. The cleavages between Catholic and Protestant, which it has been argued, were of the order of segmentary divisions, faded into insignificance beside the divide which separated Biafrans from other nationalities. There was, however, a further

incentive for Protestants to make interfaith marriages. This was the sense of disillusionment created by the failure ofthe Anglican clergy to support the Biafran cause, while their Catholic counterparts identified completely with the Biafrans in the struggle. The activities of the nuns and priests, and of 'Caritas', the Catholic relief organisation, accelerated the decline in faith of the Protestants, and produced several converts to Catholocism in the London Ibo population.

The acceptance of interfaith marriages reflects both a loss of interest in religion as such, and a feeling that religious differences were insignificant in the war-time climate of unity and solidarity. Although the latter is more consistent with the argument advanced so far, the former explanation must not be underemphasised. The loss of interest in organised religion on arrival in Britain was mentioned in the last chapter. During the war, disaffection with the church was increased by public attitudes which to many Ibos seemed hypocritical. Equally important in the case of practising Christians was the disillusionment produced by the suffering and injustice in their country, which undermined their belief in an omnipotent being.

Other normative factors in marital choice were a redefinition of conjugal roles and the application of new standards of eligibility, in response to war-time conditions. Fear of the future, the sense that one could only live for the present, created a feeling of urgency in single people and a desire to marry at all costs. The only category which was unacceptable was that of Osu or slave. The absence of structural support from kin during the war, together with the new financial independence of individuals in London, led in the direction of individual autonomy in marriage, and new criteria in mate selection. Personal compatibility became as important as congruence in social origins. The absence of the extended family from the immediate situation of married couples affects their definition of conjugal roles. These become

less complementary and more interchangeable which calls for greater emphasis in personality and less on ascribed characteristics.[1]

The emphasis on personal compatibility, with its corollary of freedom of selection, explains some of the intermarriages between Osu and freeborn and involving partners with other social stigma which took place during the war. New norms of procedure emphasised individual choice at the expense of collective (family) involvement. In practical terms this meant the absence of the thorough investigation of social backgrounds which was customary.

Marriages were contracted in ignorance with women who had illegitimate children or were married already, and with men who had wives in Nigeria. In this category are a couple who met and married in London during the war. The girl had had a baby here but did not tell her husband. Investigations by his family would not, as it happened, have revealed this fact, since her own family had not been told of the birth, When the husband learned of it after the marriage had taken place he was shocked and resentful at having to take responsibility for another man's child. The exposure severely undermined the relationship and the couple separated. More important, perhaps, were other intermarriages brought about by the changed norms of procedure, such as unions between Osu and freeborn. Such marriages were not always made in ignorance of the Osu partner's status, however. An example may be quoted here to show the sort of circumstances in which intermarriage of this sort took place.

> John had intended to marry when he got home after completing his law degree. But the war broke out when his course was half completed. He stayed on after qualifying and took a comparatively well paid clerical job. He was twenty-eight and decided to marry. There was no single girls from his home town but John met again a girl he had known in Nigeria. She was from a place very far from his own, but friends from the same area told him that she was an Osu. However, John paid little attention

1. This proposition is advanced by R.F. Winch (1971). Winch suggests that the importance of complementary needs varies inversely with the functionality of the extended family.

to this warning, for he felt that the choice was his own affair, and personal compatibility was all important. He married the girl without seeking the permission of his parents or kin in London. He simply wrote to inform people of his intention. If they had disapproved, he said, it would have made no difference, for he and his wife were christians and had a christian marriage. This showed that it was an entirely personal affair. (The institution of ritual slavery did not, in fact, traditionally exist in John's area. However, his sharp reaction to the suggestion that his relations in London might have been consulted, and the unusual emphasis on his christian faith, suggests that he was well aware of the stigma attached to his wife among her own people.[1] He rationalised his decision by insisting that, as a Christian, he and his wife were not bound to observe convention.)

The tendency to marry across boundaries during the war must not be overemphasised. For the opposite tendency was equally pronounced in some cases. The traditional preference for a local marriage was not, infact, inconsistent with war-time conditions. Local particularism in the political sphere, it has been argued, was reinforced by the war. Interaction was intensified between individuals from the same town or district. Local organisations became the basis for political centralisation, and local politics, frequently, became the focus of attention for individuals with aspirations for national leadership.

Political aspirations had, even before the war, motivated certain individuals to select partners from their home towns. An 'old politician' who had been active in national politics in Nigeria before coming to Britain in the early 1950s had this to say about the choice of spouse: "I married from my own town and all my in-laws are also from Nimo. I wouldn't marry anywhere else, for nationalistic reasons, because I'm interested in politics and could only succeed in Nimo with a Nimo wife. For men who aren't in public life,

1. The universal recognition of the stigma in the present situation bears out the contention of F. Barth that in a polyethnic situation cultural traits are diffused within a group to reinforce its homogeneity vis-a-vis outsiders. F. Barth (1969) p. 18-19.

like doctors and lawyers, it's different. It wouldn't matter if they married outside, Two friends of mine who studied law in London returned home and both stood for nimination in Onitsha as N.C.N.C. candidates. One practised law in Onitsha, the other in Lagos. But the one who lived locally and hence could claim to represent the Onitsha people's interests had a white wife. The other, from Lagos, pointed this out to his audience at a political rally, and said that no Onitsha girl was good enough for his opponent, who therefore would not be in a position to represent all Onitshans. This man won the election. An African politician can't rule from the housetops. He must show he's the same as the people, not show that he is better than his constituents..."

The same process could be observed in London during the war. An individual who wished to rise to an executive position in the Divisional Assembly, for instance, (or in the Biafra of the future) could do so only as a representative of his Division, and before that of his town union. Local support was a pre-requisite for national office. In the circumstances it might be expected that the marriage strategy of a man with political ambitions would be governed by these requirements. The following example demonstrates perfectly, that for one man at least, this was indeed the case.

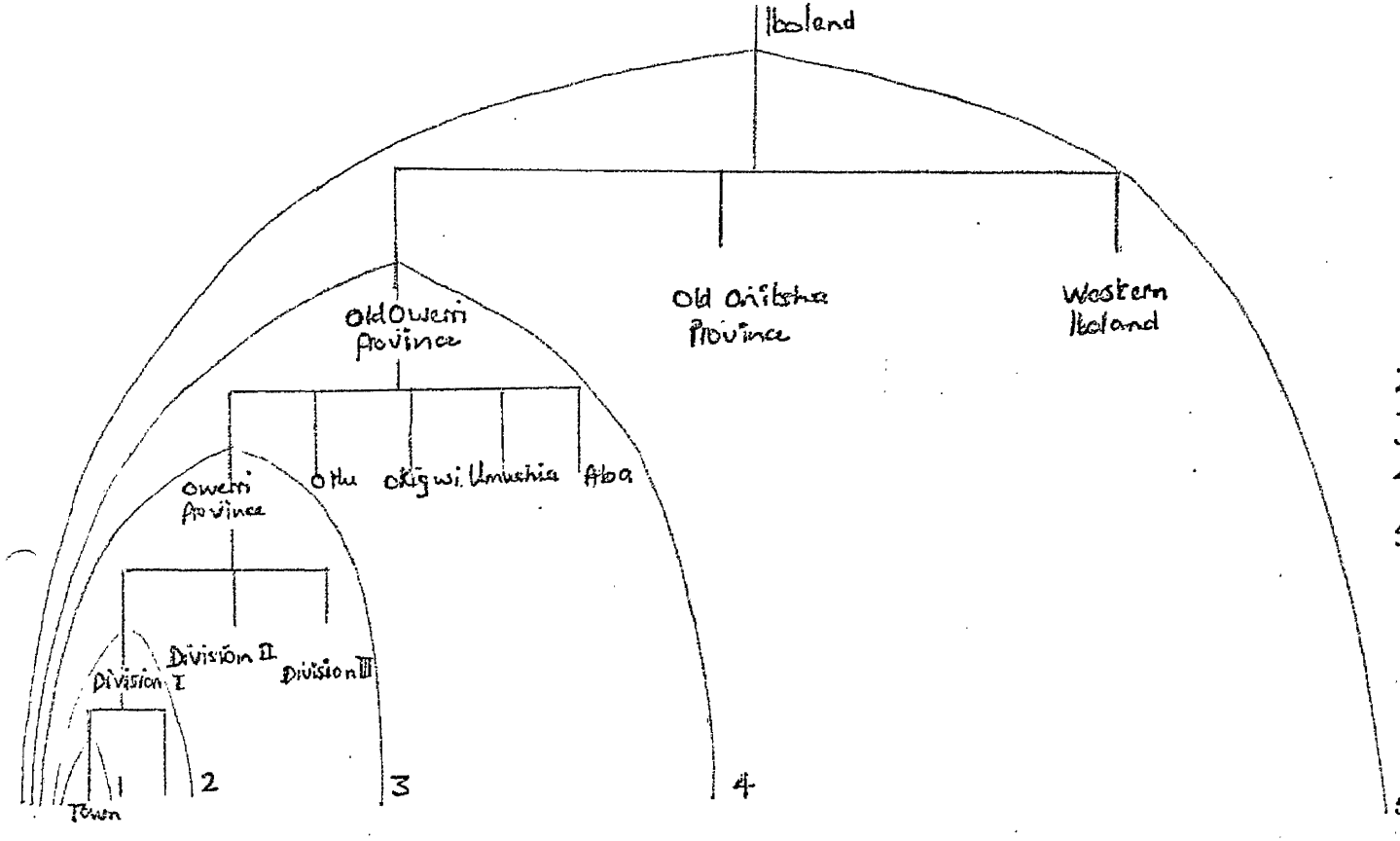
Obi Okoye was a pre-war politician with an ambition to hold high office in the N.C.N.C. party machine. He was at that time disqualified from office on account of his youth, being in his early twenties. When the war broke out he, with other activists, transferred his attention to the new national organisations; the Eastern Region Union, the Biafra Union, and the Divisional Assembly. Described by his associates as 'an openly ambitious political type' Okoye directed his energies towards the Divisional Assembly. He had held office in his town and Divisional unions before the war, and later became one of the two representatives from his Divisional Union to the Divisional Assembly, where he eventually obtained a key position on the executive despite his youth.

In 1968 Okoye decided that the time had come to marry. He was in his late twenties and would have married by now if he had been able to go home on the completion of his course in 1967. The only reason for his marrying in London, he says, was the war . Okoye, a gregarious and attractive 'man

about town' had had various affairs since his arrival in Britain. The most recent had involved an Ibo girl from another town in his province whom he had met in the course of his political life and of whom he had been very fond. However, he eventually chose a girl from his own town, who was quiet and homely, and rather plain. He was, he declared, a traditionalist where marriage was concerned. That meant marrying from his town, because the girls there made the best wives - submissive, hardworking and faithful. If he had not found a good girl from his town, he said, he would have married another Ibo girl, rather than remain single. He would never have married a non-Ibo, however, and strongly disapproved of acquaintances who married West Indians, or women of Biafran minority groups, or other 'outsiders'.

The planning of his wedding reception reflected Okoye's traditional outlook, and his use of ethnic categories to the exclusion of socio-economic, religious or other categories. His guest list was drawn up on the basis of kinship and contiguity in a series of concentric circles reminiscent of the segmentary principles discussed earlier. First on the list were his townspeople in London, excluding all those who did not attend union meetings (and therefore did not deserve to be invited to a local celebration). Next he invited people from the Division whom he knew well. There were not many, since his town dominated the division numerically. They included schoolmates and political friends. Next he invited people from a neighbouring division to the west, who were mainly in-laws, (i.e. "many of their men are married to our girls") and political friends. The fourth category consisted of people from another neighbouring division to the south. With the other two divisions it comprised a Province. Although this division was contiguous with Okoye's own, the people belonged to a different clan which was socially and culturally more remote from Okoye's. Anyway, he said, he 'just didn't like them', so invited only former school mates. The next circle included all the other Provinces in Old Owerri Province: Umuahia, Okigwi, Orlu and Aba, in which Okoye's acquaintances were, again, mainly old political friends. Finally the range was extended to the rest of

Order of Priority for Invitations to Okoye's Wedding Reception.



1. Town
2. Division
3. Province
4. Old Province
5. Iboland.

Ibo land - Old Onitsha and Western Iboland. The few individuals invited from these areas were generally former political associates of the N.C.N.C. and pre-war days, some of whom Okoye continued to work with in Biafran politics.

Okoye is untypical of young bridegrooms in his consistent application of ethnic principles in the selection of guests. Nonetheless, his case exemplifies the war-time emphasis on local solidarity, and the shifting basis of identification on segmentary lines. The criterion of locality applied in his selection of a wife and choice of guests to celebrate the event with him is explained in part by adherence to tradition, which requires that spouses come from the same or neighbouring communities. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the procedure adopted by Okoye was consistent with an increased emphasis on kinship and community which figured prominently in Biafran ideology, and was used to promote Biafran political interests.

In addition to the normative factors, increased opportunities for interaction with other Ibos underlay the war-time tendency for marriage across the boundaries or locality, religion and caste. It will be recalled that a demographic imbalance existed in the Ibo population, there being more single men than women. Legislation in 1962 and subsequently, to control the flow of immigration, coupled with the physical and financial difficulties involved in leaving Biafra during the war, reduced the likelihood of men finding women from the same area. The shortage of marriageable women was exaccerbated by the tendency among the men(and some married women) to regard single Ibo girls in London as promiscious.

Interaction with other Ibos heightened after 1967 by mass meetings which occurred at regular intervals. They were called when visiting emissaries arrived in London, and were always an occasion for raising maney. As many as 3,000 Biafrans attented at a time, and for the first time Ibos from all over

Iboland were brought into interaction, if only superficially, Some contacts, however, led to others of a heterosexual nature as the range of acquaintances was extended. Other activities to further the war effort, such as those of the specialist committees and voluntary associations described earlier, stimulated the process of interaction between men and women of different social categories.

Marital Stability. The absence of structural support during the war, and the ideological emphasis on unity, sheds light on another aspect of marriage which may be examined briefly here. The issue of marital stability and breakdown will receive greatest emphasis elsewhere in the thesis. But it is useful for the present discussion to consider the fate of particular marriages during the war.

Ignorance of backgrounds and superficial knowledge of a partner's temperament and personality brought to a speedy end certain marriages which had been contracted in the war. These were, it is said, 'marriages of convenience', which dissolved as easily as they had been made, leaving each partner free to continue life as before. More interesting are the longstanding marriages which came under pressure during the war years. Economic strains imposed by the termination of financial support from home, the need to earn a living and make substantial contributions to the war effort, undermined several hitherto stable relationships. In some cases the strains imposed by the war were 'last straw factors' which dealt the final blow to relationships which were already in difficulties.

During the war, however, such marriages were, on the whole, kept together by local people who saw the interests of the local community threatened by so disruptive an event as the breakdown of a marriage between two of their number. It was a time for collective energies to be harnessed to the war effort, and for individuals to live as harmoniously as possible in the difficult circumstances. A marital breakdown in the present state of isolation and effective termination of support of kinsfolk at home, would have harmful emotional effects

on the couple and undermine morale in the local community. Another factor was the high status of some couples in war-time associations, hence the need for discretion, and the appearance of success in marital affairs.

Consequently, attempts were made to hold together marriages in the war period which were later allowed to fall apart. The process is illustrated in the following case (for which information was obtained separately from four people who had at one time or another been involved in trying to settle the dispute.

The Bs had arrived in London in the late 1950s. Mr. B came first, to study insurance. Mrs. B, who was from the same town, came to join him in the following year. By the outbreak of the war the Bs had two children and a house, acquired with Mrs. Bs salary as a teacher. There was constant quarreling, mainly over money, and particularly over the house which Mrs. B had bought in her husband's name. His course finished, Mr. B took a post in local government, which offered security although it was not in his field, and was considerably lower in status than his wife's. In 1968 Mr. B felt that his employers were discriminating against him by paying him inadequately, and he left to do business on his own account. His efforts to sell insurance policies, however, met with little success, and he was unable to contribute to family expenditure.

The quarrelling got worse and periodically one partner left home for a few days or weeks. Mrs. B, whose patience had worn thin, as had her respect for her husband as a breadwinner, left him to fend for himself when business was good and returned to maintain him and their children when his money had run out. Both were reluctant, at that time, for the marriage to end completely. Mrs. B felt that she could not abandon her husband at a time when he was under pressure on several fronts. A breakdown of the marriage would jeopardise his position in public life as an office holder in one of the more prestigious voluntary associations. Mr. B, for his part, needed his wife's moral and financial support and had, in any case, tremendous respect and affection for her.

Their friends and relations in London (including a brother and several affinal kin, and people who had been neighbours and frequent visitors before the war) were equally anxious to prevent the situation from deteriorating further. In 1969 the efforts to settle the situation were intensified. One informant recalls that he went to the house five times with other people. A problem facing the advisers was that Mr. B would not agree to the most important of their proposals: that he should take up full-time employment again in order to contribute to family expenditure. Mr. B's problem was one of status. He felt that to accept a low-paid, albeit regular, post at his age (early forties) would be unwise, and that he should try to make money in private business, as many of his contemporaries were doing.

By the end of the war a stalemate had been reached, and a legal separation loomed. A court case was planned in 1970. Legal action was averted at the last minute by the couple themselves, and it appeared to their friends that they were for a time reconciled. At the time of fieldwork, however, Mr. B was living alone in a furnished room while his wife and the children occupied a flat in their house. The one-time advisers, although concerned about the welfare of the couple, were not as closely in touch with the situation as they had been. They were becoming preoccupied with the post-war economic resurgence (particularly housebuying) which dominated the activities of many Ibos. The gradual disengagement of some of them from the Bs' affair was a response partly to the feeling that no solution was possible. Also, however, it reflected the general withdrawal from local affairs, and dissolution of ties forged in the war years, which characterised the immediate post-war period.

The case of the Bs has been given to show how the ideological emphasis on unity affected marital conduct and stability. By contrast with marriages like the Bs', those between couples with divergent political interests were allowed, even induced, to break down. This point conveniently introduces the question of relationships between Ibos and non-Ibos.

External Boundaries. The designation of boundaries between Ibos and non-Ibos as 'external' is to an extent arbitrary. The war period was characterised, on one level at least, by strong identification of Ibos with other Biafrans though this perception of interests was not entirely shared by the latter. The identity of interests was seen most clearly in the close cooperation of individuals from the different ethnic groups - Ibo, Ibibio, Efik, Ijaw, Ogoni, Kalabari - on executive committees of national political and professional organisations. Thus the executive committee of the Eastern Nigeria Union in 1966 included four members of minority ethnic groups, occupying the posts of President, Treasurer, Financial Secretary and Social Secretary. The executive of the Biafra Union, elected in the following year, included 'minorities' men in the positions of President, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer and Financial Secretary. The next and final election held by the union in 1969 returned to office the former President, a Kalabari from what is now the Rivers State.[1]

The extent of interaction was not necessarily as great as the committees imply. Success in election did not necessarily mean a large body of personal supporters in the Biafran community. The outcome of the elections was determined by principles of sponsorship, rather than by open competition. A bemused comment from the former President of the Women's Wing, an Efik woman, makes the point. "I sympathised with the Ibos during the war, but before that I knew only about three in London. I don't know why I was elected as President of the Women's Wing..." Very few - about 10 - of the Efiks in London, she recalls, supported Biafra, so clearly she was not put into office on the strength of the Effik vote. The reason for her election, and of the elections of other minority people in key positions, it seems, was to preserve the ethnic balance in political institutions. Although it is a fascinating subject, the role of these 'frontmen', the system of Conclaves and sponsorship in political life, and political processes in general, cannot be dealt with here. The position of non-Ibos in

1. See Appendix IV

Biafran political organisations is mentioned to show that interaction existed at that level, though success in election did not necessarily mean intimacy with Ibos.

Few minority peoples were, in fact, active in the war on behalf of Biafra.[1] Like the President of the Women's Wing, the President of the Biafra Union was almost alone in his ethnic group in supporting Biafra. He was unable, it is said, even to persuade his wife to attend the meetings. Interaction with non-Ibos from the former Eastern Region was if anything reduced between 1966 and 1970 by the tendency of half of them to identify with Nigeria in the struggle. They concentrated upon their own organisations which reflected the twelve states structure.[2] Like the Biafran organisations these were a continuation of pre-war movements. The Rivers State Students' Union, inaugurated in August 1967, soon after the start of the war, had grown out of the Niger Delta Students' Union established in October 1964 to demand executive powers for the Niger Delta Development Board.[3] At about the same time a South East State Union was established, its meetings advertised in 'West Africa'.

In the circumstances it is hardly surprising that the rate of intermarriages between Ibos and minority Biafrans showed no remarkable increase.[4] Other kinds of informal interaction did, however, develop in the context of formal, non-political associations. An instance of this is the Biafran Engineers' Association, whose President, an Opobo man, developed firm friendships with fellow members of the executive, which are continued at the present time in reciprocal invitations to parties and social events. It is interesting and probably significant

1. According to the Divisional Union Registers which were called in for audit just before the end of the war, financial support from this section of the Biafran community was very weak. Rivers and Calabar people's support was hard to obtain. A relation of the President of the Union, who like him supported Biafra, persuaded only 29 Kalabaris to register their support.

2. See Appendix III, map 3.

3. West Africa, Oct.1964, August 1965, Aug.1967.

4. Few cases were encountered in the field. One, however, is of special interest in that it involves an Ibo woman who married her landlord. She was in difficult circumstances since her brother, a doctor in Nigeria, had ceased to send her money. The marriage, possibly, was seen as a solution to her problem.

that the Port Harcourt People's Social Club, which alone had united the minorities before the war, faded into obscurity when the war began. A meeting was held to see if something could be done by the members as a body, but no decision was reached. Obviously the common interest which had inspired the club in the first place was insufficient as a basis for its continued existence during the war. Although former residence in Port Harcourt was what brought the members together, the club was not a local association in the sense of a town union, in which kinship plays a decisive role. Primarily a social club, the P.H.P.S.C. had no future either as a fund-raising group, for reasons mentioned in connection with local organisations, or as a special interest group.

Relationships were close between affinal kin linked by marriages between Ibo and minority people before the war. A man from northern Iboland who married a Rivers girl in 1958 continued to provide accommodation for two families from her area, to one of which she was related. Intermarriages of this sort were least likely to be affected by the war when the minority partner had no relations in London and could therefore identify wholeheartedly with the Ibo spouse's cause. The situation was different for a woman faced with conflicting demands from an Ibo husband and her own relations in London who were firmly opposed to secession. The existence of kin in London was not by itself sufficient to create divided loyalties. But when, as was sometimes the case, a brother was actively involved in the affairs of the South East State or Rivers State Student Unions, the pressures were sufficient to break up the marriage. A case is recorded of a marriage between an Owerri man and an Ibibio nurse in 1963. The man was a close friend and colleague of the wife's husband, both having studied law at the same institution. At the commencement of hostilities in Nigeria, however, the friendship became strained. Each was interested in politics, and naturally directed his energies to the arena which would be most profitable in the long run. For the Ibo, this meant Biafra, For the Ibibio man, the twelve state

structure offered the best chances of a fruitful political career, since the field would be less competitive without the Ibos.[1] He adopted a violently hostile posture towards Biafrans, and relationships with former Biafran colleagues were terminated. So, also was the link with his brother-in-law. His sister was under strong pressure to end the marriage and identify with her kin. Since the marriage had, in the first place, been an agreement made in the interests of the two men as much as to please her, she yielded to the pressure.

Marriages between Ibos and Nigerians, particularly Nigerians in the former Eastern Region (Biafra) were thus subject to disruption. Unions involving Ibos and members of minority groups were undermined by the particularly intense rivalry between Biafrans and those who preferred to belong to the South East or Rivers States than to Biafra. Marriages between Ibos and Yorubas, however, were also vulnerable. Although the kin of Yoruba women who were married to Ibos were not so intensely involved in the war as were those of minority women, the Yoruba wives were regarded as security risks by the Biafrans and suffered from divided loyalties. No figures are available, unfortunately, to support this assertion, and no cases were encountered directly in the field. But it is generally held that marriages between Ibos and Yorubas, Urhobo or Itsekiri women frequently collapsed during the war, for these reasons.

Other relationships with Nigerians were equally subject to strain. Friendships between former colleagues and classmates cooled. The reason was more often mutual embarassment than personal antagonism, and the Biafran party to the relationship simply had no time or inclination for involvement outside the Biafran community. However, another factor restrained relationships of this kind between Ibos and Nigerians. Men who continued to associate with former friends were accused of disloyalty and even of treason. An Ibo, born and brought up

1. A young man who had been studying in London when the war broke out has in in fact recently (1972-3) been invited home to become a minister in the government of the South East State.

in northern Nigeria, who had never been to the east and spoke Igbo only imperfectly, was reluctant to give up his Nigerian friends. Because of this he says, he was 'blacklisted'. His Nigerian connections were denounced publicly, and suspicion was cast upon him because he did not support the Biafran cause as wholeheartedly as his fellows. Pressure of this sort was brought to bear on individuals who were defined as deviant in the climate of suspicion and anxiety generated by the war. Support had to be wholehearted, and to be seen as such. No opposition, either passive or active, could be tolerated.

Economic relations between landlords and tenants of different ethnic groups were less often disrupted, since they could be conducted at the superficial and impersonal level characteristic of structured relstionships of this sort. There are examples in the existing population of the Ibos who coexisted with Yorubas and Northern Nigerians throughout the war and continue to live amicably together. During the war their relationships were characterised by mutual reserve.

Cooperation in political activities was inevitably affected by the war. The London branch of the Nigeria Union, which had contained an active contingent of Ibos before the war, was 'unwilling to come out against Biafra' when the war broke out, 'because of the N.C.N.C. element.' An Action Committee of those who felt otherwise developed to restore Nigerian unity as speedily as possible. The Union as a whole, however, lost the support of its Ibo members. There was no formal interaction between the Union and its opposite number, since the latter was unrecognised in official Nigerian circles.

Relationships with other blacks - West Africans, West Indians, and Black Americans - cannot be easily categorised. Politically there was little personal involvement by members of these groups in Biafran activities. The policy of black organisations in America was to support Nigeria against Biafra. The Biafran leadership was regarded as an elitist group motivated by bourgeois nationalist principles which were inimical to African interests and conducive

to neocolonialism.[1] The West Indian student community in London did not have such a coherent view, and neither were they interested. Little is known of the reactions of W.A.S.U. to the crisis.

Interaction between Ibos and other blacks occurred almost exclusively at the level of personal, informal relationships with members of the opposite sex. West Indian and West African women were brought into the community as wives and girl-friends.

TABLE 2.6. Socio-cultural Origin of Husband and Wife in Marriages contracted in Britain after 1966 . (Source: Marriage Sample).

Origin of husband	Origin of wife: Onitsha	Owerri	Western Ibo	Other Nigerian	Other Black	White	TOTAL
Onitsha	16	7	3	-	5	2	33(36%)
Owerri	3	28	2	1	8	7	49(53%)
W. Ibo	1	1	2	-	1	2	7(8%)
Nigerian	-	1	1	-	-	-	2(2%)
Other Black	—	1	-	-	-	-	1(%)
White	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	20(22%)	38(41%)	8(9%)	1(1%)	14(15%)	11(12%)	92(100%)

The number of interethnic and international marriages during the war is not, in absolute terms very large, only 16% (15) marriages made in U.K. after 1966 involved Ibomen and other Nigerian, West African or West Indian women. A further 3% (3) were between Ibo women and non-Ibo black men. This compares with an average for the whole period (1940s - 1970s) of 9% (30) interethnic marriages by Ibo men and 2% (6) by Ibo women. (These figures relate to all marriages, including those made in Nigeria.)

Looked at in terms of physical distance the same pattern emerges. Figures for the total of marriages produced earlier showed that marriages made between 1966 and 1969 involved more 'long distance' marriages, i.e. with non-Ibos,

1. C. Cruise O'Brien,(1969). Black Americans regardded Biafra as a movement of black nationalists; the civil war was a battle between warring tribes; and the white interest of pro-Biafrans was mischievous and patronising.

than did those in the earlier period. Although in percentage terms the distribution of marriages made in Britain alone is similar in pre-war and post 1966 periods the actual numbers involved are very different for the two periods. Only 32 marriages were contracted between couples who met in Britain before 1966, while the equivalent for the war and post-war period is 92. Thus three times as many interethnic marriages occurred in the post 1966 period as before it, although the size of the population remained roughly constant.

TABLE 2.7 . Physical distance between Hometowns of couples, and time and place of marriage (Source: Marriage Sample).

Distance	Met and married in U.K. pre 1966		U.K. post 1966		TOTAL	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Near 0-20miles	12	38	29	32	41	33
Intermediate 21-50miles	7	22	29	32	36	29
Far 51+	11	35	32	35	43	35
Not known	2	5	2	1	4	3
TOTAL	32	100	92	100	124	100

Reasons have already been offered, in terms of norms and opportunities, for men's relationships with women outside the local group. But the normative factor of Biafran unity, which explained why 'any Ibo' was acceptable, cannot be invoked to explain marriage with West Indians and West Africans. Before an alternative explanation is offered, some cases may be cited to show the different circumstances in which such unions occurred.

J.U. travelled to Britain in 1965 to study law. About a year after his arrival his senior sister wrote to say that the family had found a girl for him to marry, and were arranging to send her to Britain. J.U. promptly replied to the effect that he wanted to choose his own wife. (If he had ignored his sister's letter and the girl had arrived, J.U. says, he would have been obliged to marry her, or risk enmity between the two families.) By 1968 he was ready to marry. His four closest friends, young men of his own age who came from his own town or clan, and with whom he spent most of his free time, had no sisters in London, and J.U. did not

meet an Ibo girl he wished to marry. At a party, however, he met a West Indian nurse. His senior brother in London, who had financed his education throughout, opposed marriage on the grounds that their mother would not like a foreigner in the family. However, his real reason, he says now, is that he felt that his brother should have married a university graduate like himself, for intellectual compatibility. He now thinks that the choice was a good one. J.U.'s wife is fully part of the family circle in London (three brothers, two sisters and their spouses) and has few West Indian associates.

In the second case the liaison between an Ibo student and a West Indian nurse did not meet with the same fortunate outcome.

In the course of his active social life Vincent became friendly with a West Indian nurse who became pregnant. He was in his mid-twenties and had no wish to get married. But he liked the girl , and since they were both earning (Vincent was an insurance clerk and studied insurance at an evening class) he decided they should live together. His sister in London was strongly disapproving and told his older brothers on returning home that young Vincent was 'living in sin'. Vincent, who no longer relied on his brothers for financial support, ignored their reprimands and no longer writes to them. He still does not intend to marry the girl, but loses nothing by continuing to cohabit, for household expenses are shared and there are no restrictions on his freedom to move about as a single man.

Liaisons of this sort were not always entered into with so little consequence to the individual concerned. The repercussions in the following case arose from the fact that a senior brother was available to apply sanctions against an undesirable relationship. The senior brother tells the story:

"I brought my younger brother to Britain and am paying for him here. During the war I knew he wanted to marry and suggested several Ibo girls to him but he wouldn't take my advice. He became involved with a Ghanaian girl who already had a child. She told him she was a divorcee and that her father occupied a high position in the civil service. My brother was infatuated and was prepared to marry her, without making any investigations as to the truth of her statements. She moved into his flat. I visited my brother several times and realised how involved he was. I found out by enquiries that the girl in fact had two illegitimate children. I invited

my brother to come to my house across the road, for a discussion. He wouldn't see reason and we actually came to blows. He left with a bleeding nose and the girl left his flat the same day. My brother continues to say that it was none of my business and that he had known all along about the girl's past. In fact he has since confided to a friend that he didn't know, and he agrees that her background would have disqualified her from marriage."

In this case it was not so much the girl's nationality as her promiscuous past and doubtful honesty which made her ineligible for marriage. The senior brother was able to enforce his will partly on account of his moral authority. But the younger man's financial dependence upon him was the decisive factor in terminating the affair.

Marrying black women from outside Biafra was inconsistent with the ideal of Biafran unity. It was, however, consistent with another Ibo marriage norm, according to which women are assimilated into their husband's descent group. The West Indina and West African women married by Ibos during the war became part of the Biafran community. Interethnic marriage did not imply a weakening of the boundaries between Biafrans and the rest of the London population which it has been argued, became more firmly drawn at this time. Rather, standards of eligibility were redefined to satisfy the need of single Biafran men in London to marry, while preserving their autonomy as a political group. Foreign wives presented no threat because it was assumed that they would identify with their husbands in the struggle, and in most cases they did so. (An exception was seen in the case of Chima, quoted in the General Introduction). Any foreign woman who was not positively identified with the opposing side and would not be a financial burden on the community was acceptable.

The incorporation of a wife into her husband's group in Ibo custom (a point to be expanded in a later chapter) is a factor in intermarriage with white women also. The pattern of interracial marriages during the war, however, offers an interesting contrast to the pre-war situation. The first point to

note is that interracial marriage declined from pre-war levels. Secondly, it involved continental women almost exclusively. In the sample of the existing population about 50 (a sixth) couples met and married in Britain between 1967 and 1969. Of these, only two were interracial marriages while six were interethnic. The two white wives were Danish and Swedish. Although the sample is small and possibly unrepresentative, the figures are significant. The indication that white women in general and English women in particular were less acceptable as wives during the war period supports the evidence of the widening social gap which could be seen in other spheres of activity.

Although no marriages with English women have been recorded, there is evidence of liaisons which assumed a permanent character, resulting after the war in marriage or cohabitation. It is significant, however, that these affairs involved women who were actively engaged in fighting for the Biafran cause. In at least two cases Ibo men became involved with women who held executive positions in pro-Biafran organisations.

Ibo-British marriages contracted before the war do not appear to have been especially vulnerable on account of the British origin of the wife. On the whole a distinction was made between the hostile activities of the government and the individual member of the public. The fact that they were British did not place these wives in a difficult position as happened in the case of Yoruba or other Nigerian wives. Only one incident of open hostility towards an English wife is recorded for the period, although there were perhaps many more. An English wife attended a meeting of the Biafra Union with her child. Some Ibo women sitting nearby abused her, declaring that people like her should not be there since the British were the cause of all the trouble. The English woman retorted that her child was Biafran and she had come to defend its interests. People who had overheard the exchange reported the matter to the chairman, who ordered the Ibo women to make a public apology.

Some marriages did collapse under the strain but for reasons which were financial rather than political. No cases were recorded of English wives who left their husbands because they agreed with the policies of the British Government. It seemed, rather, that certain wives were unable or unwilling to make the financial sacrifices demanded of them. This cause of marital breakdown was not, as we have seen, peculiar to Ibo-English marriages.

While the Biafran attitude towards the British Government was one of resentment and suspicion, the man in the street was thought to be either ignorant or apathetic, and was by and large disregarded in Biafran thinking. No organised attempts were made to present the Biafran case to the general public, though there was some collaboration between individual Biafrans and interested members of the public in such organisations as 'Friends of Biafra', the Britain-Biafra Association, and Save Biafra. But the Biafrans involved were disproportionately marginal people.[1] They included individuals who were less likely to succeed in the central Biafran organisations. They were in Biafran terms ineligible for leadership either on account of age and spectacular failure to achieve qualifications, or identificationwith the Old politicians, or the possession of other social stigma. Not all the Biafran members of the association fell into the marginal category, however, An informant, who could boast of some success in central political organisations, says that he joined the Britain-Biafra Association because he felt that this was where Biafran energies in London should be directed. The most useful task of the Biafrans in London, he felt, was to convert the British public and people in strategic positions. This was the objective of the Biafra Lobby, the collective term given to the various voluntary associations and amorphous interests which joined in on the Biafran side. Yet others joined, it is said, to acquire English girlfriends. A sizeable proportion of Biafrans, however, whose opinions were officially expressed by the Biafra Union, regarded the external cause-groups with suspicion. The Britain-Biafra Association was thought to contain British Government agents among its members.

1. These facts were obtained in the course of participant observation in two of the organisations named.

Apart from interaction within the framework of voluntary associations of this sort, relationships with the British were specific and contractual. Contacts were exploited for aid and information. Aid was sought from welfare associations and religious organisations such as the Catholic students' Chaplaincy, San Marino, the British Council and the Commonwealth Students' Childrens' Society. Information was obtained from individuals in the Biafra Lobby: M.P.'s, journalists and executives of oil companies with interests in the disputed area. Relationships were established in the workplace with English colleagues but did not extend beyond the confines of work. Partly this was due to differences in background and aspirations between the Ibos and their predominantly working-class colleagues. Apart from the absence of common interests and outlook, the Ibos were simply not interested in cultivating relationships with outsiders, for their time and energy were absorbed in the organisations and activities directed at promoting the war effort.

Conclusion. The pattern of social relationships during the war exhibited two opposite and in a sense contradictory tendencies. One was the intensification of interaction within local groups. The other was the expansion of individual networks beyond the confines of local groups. The former was evident in the political sphere in the rapid development of local unions, the regularisation of meetings, the frequency and intensity of contact between members for a variety of purposes. This development was paralleled in certain marriages where area homogamy was made the primary criterion of mate selection. In the same sphere, marital instability was checked in the interests of local efficiency and harmony.

The opposite tendency - to expand beyond the confines of local groups - was again manifested in both the political and kinship spheres. In the political sphere it was seen in the extension of political units on a segmentary pattern. Local units became the basis of a larger, central organisation. At the same time, networks were extended on non-traditional lines which cut across local

groupings. On such a basis were the numerous voluntary associations founded, and individual friendships established, whose durability in many cases outlasted the framework in which they had emerged.

In marriage and heterosexual friendships, too, there was a tendency for traditional barriers to give way. The bounndaries of locality and religion, caste and characteristics which were non-structural in nature, dwindled in significance. The tendency was to marry 'anyone', reflecting the ideological emphasis on unity which received formal expression in the national political organisations and their ancillaries. The common interests of Biafrans and the shared identity inspired by these interests, subsumed local and sectional interests and identities.

In marital choice, the normative emphasis on unity was matched by factors of a different kind, relating to the opportunities for individuals to meet people outside the conventional circle of eligibles. Not only were Ibos brought into contact with a wider range of people than they had been before the war. They were in a position of <u>having</u> to find wives in Britain, since they were of marriageable age and could not return to Nigeria to marry. Their choice of wives was guided by the non-availability of women in particular social categories and by changing criteria of eligibility. An important factor in marital selection and liaisons was economic. Social restraint imposed hitherto by financial dependence on kin was lifted and it was possible to improve one's financial situation by the strategy of marriage.

The discussion in this chapter has centred on the ideological factor of unity. Less attention has been given to the freedom of choice which was conferred by the war. This issue is taken up later in a discussion of the post-war situation and the dilemma of individual versus collective interests (the involvement of kin) in marital choice and procedure.

CHAPTER THREE

The Post-War Period 1970-2. Part I: The Decline of Formal Organisations.

Introduction. The collapse of Biafra in January 1970 introduced a new era in the relationships of the Ibos in London. In some respects social activity has simply reverted to its pre-war pattern.[1] In other respects the pattern of relationships has a uniqueness which testifies to an irreversible change in the in the circumstances and outlook of the Ibos in London. The new phase is marked by a disintegration of formal ties and by infrequency in informal contact within the community. There are no longer any universally recognised collective interests to defend, and individual interests are served in ways other than the intensive communal action which characterised the war years.

The rapid decline of national political organisations - the Biafra Union, and Divisional Assembly - and of non-local associations - professional bodies and special interest groups - has recreated the situation of five years before. The sudden falling off in attendance of local union meetings, equally, suggests a reversion to the pre-war situation. But thee the resemblance ends. Relationships with other groups cannot easily be resumed. The reintegration of Ibos into mixed associations - Nigerian political organisations and professional bodies, student welfare and religious organisations like the British Council and the Overseas' Students' Commendation Centre - is markedly slow and often absent altogether.

Relationships within the community have assumed new forms. A movement away from the intimacy and involvement of the war towards individual autonomy is observed in day to day affairs, in leisure activities and in the definition of interests. The Ibos' newly found economic independence has acquired a

1. Since the facts presented in this chapter and the remaining ones were current at the time of fieldwork the present tense is used for the remainder of the thesis.

character of permanence, and expression in a variety of enterprises. The post-war pattern of economic activity is one of full-time employment, a combination of work and study, and a rush to acquire property. The life style of the immediate post-war years is unique in the experience of most people. A corollary of the new pattern of work and wealth is a tendency towards homecentredness, and the development of status differentiation along new lines. Some war-time links have been attenuated. Others have been fostered. But a general diminution of the sense of obligation towards fellow Ibos in London can be observed, even within the circle of kin. An interesting development has occurred in this respect. Members of individual families, their spouses and children, gathered in London during the war and for the first time large groups of related individuals coexist.

Relationships with kin in London and in Nigeria have taken on a new dimension, reflecting the peculiar situation of the Ibo students after the war. For while they are financially independent, as they were not before the war, old ties with kin have been resumed. These ties carry with them obligations which in the new situation seem outmoded. The renewal of old authority patterns conflicts with the new-found economic and psychological independence of the students. The dilemma is particularly acute for single people contemplating marriage. Their criteria of selection, ideas of procedure and of conjugal roles are shaped by their war experience and by the new environment. In some cases the criteria conflict sharply with those of their families. It is a dilemma which faced the Ibos during the war, too, but to a lesser extent. In those years the constraint normally excercised by parents and local people was weak or absent, and a sense of crisis and urgency gave the seal of legitimacy to certain actions which after the war are subject to scrutiny.

The lives of married couples, equally, reflect the changed circumstances. Aspirations for home ownership and social recognition, the renewed material obligations to both families, and changing definitions of conjugal roles, have set up strains which disrupt some relationships and put others in jeopardy.

These and other issues are dealt with in the remaining chapters. The present chapter, as a continuation of the last, takes up the question of formal organisations, both national and local, and their rapid decline in the immediate post-war period. The discussion falls into three parts. The first deals with the dissolution of national associations, The second concentrates upon local organisations. In the third part an explanation for the absence of popular interest in formal organisations is sought in economic individualism, the personal preoccupation with jobs, business and property.

National Organisations. When Biafra collapsed on 12th January 1970, the active life of most of the voluntary associations was terminated abruptly. The national political organisations - the Biafra Union and the Divisional Assembly - disappeared overnight. Official records, minutes of meetings, registers of members remained in the possession of people who held them at the time. The other groups, too,(eg. occupational and welfare associations) were disbanded often without formality. The smaller of them, such as the professional and special interest groups, which could call together their members comparatively easily, were formally dissolved. The Biafran Management Association, for instance, was discontinued by the will of the majority, since it had lost its raison d'etre with the collapse of Biafra. It had started as a Biafran organisation, with the object of becoming the official national body serving the interests of the profession in the country. There was no reason to continue either independently or as an adjunct of the Nigerian equivalent. Members felt that there was no future for them in Nigeria and were reluctant to resume relations with Nigerian colleagues. The association came to an end through disillusionment. Others

were discontinued for fear of blackmail, and the desire to preserve the right to practise chosen professions. It was thought that members would be reported for failing to accept defeat if they continued as a body and would be unable to find work at home. The precise reason for the loss of interest was not always clear, for the withdrawal of members was often too rapid for a formal assessment ofthe situation. The Biafran Marketing Association, for instance, was never officially disbanded, for too few members remained to legitimize the act. At the end of the war a meeting was held to appraise the situation. Members decided that action at that stage would be premature and that more time was needed to decide the best course of action for the future. After a lapse of over eighteen months, a second meeting was planned for September 1971, to settle the fate of the organisation. Two alternatives were open to the members; they could either disband, or join the Nigerian Marketing Association. In the event they were unable to form a quorum so the meeting was suspended and the association simply ceased to exist.

The fate of the Marketing Association has been shared by those of the lawyers, the automobile engineers, the insurance brokers, bankers, nurses and others. Each had been formed by Eastern Nigerian Students who had only their qualifications in common. After the war the geographical unit which had defined the limits of membership ceased to exist and with it the unifying factor which would have justified the continuation of the associations.

Not all the voluntary associations have disappeared without trace. Some continue to operate under different names, for the political changes do not conflict with their fundamental aims or seriously undermine their operation. The Biafran All Stars Football team, for instance, has incorporated three non-Ibo Nigerians and become simply the Allstars. Similarly a small study group of economists continued until the middle of 1971 to engage in intellectual and social pursuits. At the time of fieldwork they were meeting regularly in

each other's homes, taking turns to present papers and discussing issues of particular interest, such as Nigeria's current development plan. The group existed also as a savings club, with each member collecting the combined savings in turn. Their wives operated a similar system. The group's activities came to an end gradually with the departure of members to take up posts abroad. Two went to join the World Bank in Washington. A third took up an Associate Professorship in the same city. The two remaining in London continue to work as lecturers in local colleges.

Other associations persist as informal groups which are mobilised for social and business purposes. Such is the case with the Biafran Parents' Association, described in the last chapter. The families which remained to achieve their objective of evacuating their children from Biafra were, at the time of field-work, frequent visitors in each other's homes. All of them live south of the river. Another association whose objective changed only marginally with the end of the war is the Biafra Management Association, which officially ceased to operate while a nucleus of members continued as a business association. Early in 1970 the President of the Management Association left the group and his place as president of the business association was taken by the former vice-president of the larger body. Two other people withdrew from the business association at the same time and a woman member withdrew later, leaving eight actively involved.

The object of the association is to make money for its members by financing their individual business projects. Proposals are put in writing, and estimates are submitted to the group which evaluates their potential and backs them financially, taking a percentage of the profits in return. Late in 1970, for instance, a woman member gave up her job as a personal assistant to begin her own employment agency, which the association established for her as a limited company.

Multiplex relationships exist between the members. Members associate for business purposes, they mix socially and render personal assistance to each other. Business meetings are held in each house in turn. There is a considerable amount of visiting between families. Obligations of friendship are met in acts of mutual assistance. Thus the technical adviser and his wife stayed with the secretary when moving to their new house. The strength of the association, in the opinion of the secretary, lies in the close personal ties between members and the informal constitution of the group. It is recognised, however, that when the group is in Nigeria it might be difficult to preserve the harmony of outlook and interests, and individual responsibilities in the association will have to be defined more strictly. Otherwise personal conflicts may undermine the success of the business.

It is difficult to say why some associations have flourished and others died after the war. The persistence of informal groups can be explained by no single factor. While members of the study group enjoyed a certain amount of intimacy by virtue of their education and occupation, the same cannot be said of the nucleus of families in the Biafran Parents' Association. In educational terms a wide disparity exists between the adults in the group, which includes a college lecturer with a doctorate degree, an arts graduate who works as a clerical officer in the Civil Service, a ticket office clerk who studies accountancy part-time, a qualified and practising accountant, a surveyor employed by a local authority, and a woman primary school teacher. At the same time, however, each individual is involved in other networks, often more consistent in terms of socio-economic status. The college lecturer, for instance, is a member also of the study group and networks founded in the operation of Club Two-fifty during the war. Other informal groupings persist when the financial interests of members are served, as in the remnant of the Biafra Management Association. The question of social networks and the basis of association will be taken up again in a later chapter.

In contrast to the pragmatic outlook of the groups discussed so far, others continue to operate after the war for ideological reasons. One in particular stands out for attention. The Welfare International was formed by individuals who were apolitical in the sense that they positively dissociated themselves from formal political activities in the context either of the Biafra Union or the Divisional Assembly. They regarded the transactional approach of politicians in these organisations as contemptible and ineffective. They shared a strong commitment towards public service for its own sake, and steadfastly avoided what they regarded as the conventional basis for individual cooperation and collective action: self interest. The multiplex ties between members transcended local and occupational boundaries and distinctions based on age and marital status in a manner characteristic of other war-time associations. The difference between the Welfare International and others which persist at the present time is the powerful motivating force of their activities which are nationalist in orientation if not in immediate objectives.

The Biafra Welfare International (B.W.I.) was formed in July 1968[1] with the object of helping individual Biafrans stranded abroad. It was regarded by its members as a national, specialist organisation like the Nurses' Association and others, its area of interest being welfare. The aim was to assist people whose problems were of relevance for Biafrans in general, such as deportation cases, rather than those which could be dealt with by clan unions as matters of local concern, such as sickness and death. Branches were established in Germany, Sweden and Holland. At the end of the war the members expressed a wish to continue since the problems in which they were interested remained to be solved. There was a need for the continuing provision of welfare, a task which the Nigerian government

1. Details of the history, aims and activities of the B.W.I. were obtained from four members. Not all the information was consistent on points of detail but broadly similar in respect of the composition and objectives of the organisation.

should have undertaken and which the Biafran government would have done. There were still personal problems, especially legal ones, which had to be solved. It was agreed, however, that the name 'Biafra' should be dropped from the title, which became simply the Welfare International. This was not because members were no longer Biafran in sentiment but because under the new title their work would be more likely to progress without interference from official quarters.

After the war the objectives of the association are little changed. Although priority is given to individual welfare, the Welfare International seeks to serve Biafran interests in other ways too. It tries to provide a forum for interaction between Biafrans, and to commemorate Biafrans independence; to keep the concept of Biafra alive and to foster other organisations with the same objective.

The activities of the association correspond closely to its objectives. It is primarily involved in personal problems of which the deportation case of fifteen year old Godson Anosike is a typical example.[1] The boy had been sent from the Ivory Coast by the Red Cross to join his uncle in Britain, since his father had died during the war. His entry was contested, and a Home Office deportation order was issued. The uncle engaged lawyers to contest the decision. The Welfare International helped to meet the legal costs. Another legal case recently handled concerns a student who came from Russia and was given two weeks to stay in Britain. Almost immediately this was reduced by immigration officials to one week. The student's brother, a member of the B.W.I., contacted the president who made representations to the Home Office and got the period of permitted residence extended to six months.

Other cases, like this one, concern the kin and friends of members and involve problems whose personal nature places them beyond the range of the association's declared interests. Involvement in such cases is justified by reference to the commendable attitudes and behaviour of the individual concerned. A man from a minority ethnic group in Eastern Nigeria had a nervous breakdown in 1970.

1. For an account of the case in the national press, see The Guardian, Saturday 22nd May 1971.

Since he was ' a strong Biafran' the B.W.I. decided to help him. Arrangements were made for his wife to join him in England. A job was found for her on her arrival and the couple were rehoused in property owned by the relative of a B.W.I. member. A similar case concerns a B.W.I. member whose child was killed in a fire in her foster home. Her father, who 'believed in national causes' did not belong to his local union which would in normal circumstances have given help, because of its unprogressive (i.e. self-seeking) elements. He was by contrast, an active supporter of the B.W.I. and the organisation therefore handled the funeral for him. It supplied everything that was required and detailed members to accompany him everywhere until his grief had worn off.

This version of the case was contradicted by another informant. According to the second version, the B.W.I. on hearing of the child's death, did not wait to be asked to help but proceeded to the man's house. On arrival they found the Town Union already making arrangements for the funeral. However, the B.W.I. soon overshadowed the union in their activity and impressed the latter with their effectiveness. The townspeople were struck by the fact that 'people from different areas could organise and work together like a single individual'. The B.W.I. president was introduced and made a speech, and the local union ended up by contributing only money. The organisation of the event was undertaken by the B.W.I.

While the first informant justified the involvement of the B.W.I. in terms of its official objectives, the second indicates an unofficial fole in relation to its members similar to that of town unions; namely as a provider of social security. Both versions concur in stressing the absence of conflict and duplication in the activity of the national and the local organisation on that occasion. Of the relationship between the B.W.I. and town unions more will be said shortly.

A final example may be quoted to demonstrate the spirit of altruism behind the acts of assistance. It was offered by the President in illustration of the work of the association but was, it transpired, a personal undertaking involving no-one but himself. A Hausa student of works management at the same college as the President was in financial difficulties. He had a cheque for American dollars which his bank refused to cash. The president of the B.W.I. then accompanied him to the bank to persuade the officers to accept the cheque. When this failed he obtained a loan on his own account, and transferred it to the Hausa student who promised to repay him when he could. Discussing the case, the president agreed that the role of the B.W.I. was inconspicuous and to that extent it could hardly be quoted as an example of B.W.I. activity. After a moment's reflection he concluded that although the act itself could not be attributed to the association, the attitude which inspired it had first been developed there.

Apart from acts of assistance the B.W.I. organises dances and seminars, and tries to obtain the release of political prisoners. The latter endeavour has met with some success, at least in respect of one eminent Biafran who had been in detention since the end of the war. Amnesty International had been unable to help in this case since it deals only with people who have never taken up arms. The B.W.I. managed to obtain the man's release by discovering his whereabouts and contacting 'the right authority' who communicated with the Nigerian Government.

Several dances have been presented for the purpose of fundraising and promoting interaction between Biafrans. The dances have been held on or near 29th May, which has assumed the status of a Rememberance Day in the minds of the B.W.I. members. The first dance, held on 30th May 1970, was poorly supported, although many people had bought tickets. The proceeds weresufficient, however, for the organisers to send a gift of £100 to the Government of Gabon, as a token of thanks for the support given to Biafra during the war, and for the care of refugee

children. A second dance, held later that year, was ruined by a power strike. The third took place on 29th May 1971 and was in the opinion of the organisers a success. Between 200 and 300 people attended, contacted individually by word of mouth and hand-distributed leaflets. The decision had been taken not to advertise in 'West Africa' which was seen as representing alien interests and was in any case still largely unread by most Ibos. The invitees to the dance included white supporters of pro-Biafran war-time organisations.

Not much profit was made but that, in any case, had not been the primary objective. (An informant who was encouraged by his brother-in-law, a B.W.I. member, to attend the dance, was impressed by the fact that it was his presence, rather than his money, which was required.) More important, from the organisers' point of view, was that people renewed old friendships and exchanged addresses. By means of the dance the association was helping to keep alive the spirit of community which had been so fruitful in the preceeding period. The opportunity of the dance was used by representatives of other organisations to distribute literature and notices of forthcoming events.

Despite the vitality and wide scope of interests of the organisation its general influence must not be overestimated. The activities of the B.W.I. are conducted by an organisation that is small and simple. The group, which has between ten and twenty members, is formally organised with a president, secretary and treasurer. There are only two committees, handling legal and social matters. Finance and welfare are discussed in the general meetings, which are for specific purposes rather than held on a regular basis. The association has contacts, but no formal relationships with sponsors of various nationalities. There are no formal subscribers, however, for this would set up a system of accountability and the need to inform outsiders of the group's activities in advance, and so restrict its ability to undertake spontaneous acts of assistance.

An element of secrecy surrounds the association and its activities. Members are not generally known to outsiders and membership is difficult to acquire. According to the secretary, the group is discriminating in its choice of new members because it wants people who are really dedicated to the service of others. A man may be asked to carry a letter abroad, or to lend a large sum of money to be repaid when the banks open the following morning. (A few days before the interview the secretary had been roused at midnight by a man on his way to the U.S.A. from Nigeria. He needed a large sum of money which had to be raised by 8.30 the following morning so that he could continue his flight. The secretary set off, taking his shaving kit with him so that he could proceed to the office from wherever he was at day break, and went round to each member in turn. The money was raised and the Nigerian caught his scheduled flight.) The basis of the operation is trust. Personal integrity and confidence in each other are the essential requirements of membership;

Potential members, therefore, are carefully vetted. The criteria for admission include the backgrounds of husband and wife, care being taken to avoid undesirable connections (e.g. unscrupuluousness). Other criteria are trustworthiness, record in town union (it is an advantage to have successfully held office), and a job record. On the basis of these characteristics an individual's honesty and reliability are calculated. Potential recruits are subject to a formal procedure which begins with the completion of an application form containing such details as name, occupation and Division. At the next meeting he is nominated by two paid-up members (there is an annual subscription of £3.15) and called upon to say how he can contribute to the welfare objectives of the association. (He is expected to state his professional skills here, as an accountant, solicitor, lawyer or caterer). The high standard required for membership results in failure to gain admission and in expulsion from the association. An individual who had tried and failed to become a member was encountered in the field, though the precise reasons for his failure were not elicited. Another who had been asked

to leave was said by an executive member to have been hopelessly incompetent and irresponsible.

The mode of recruitment to the association, and the element of secrecy which surrounds its workings suggests a strongly elitist principle. It is, however, consistent with the self-image which members have of themselves as 'people who have a job to do and get on with it', 'are not concerned with volubility', and 'don't go about looking for members just for their subscriptions.' In thinking of themselves as an unpretentious and hardworking group of people the B.W.I. members during the war compared themselves favourably with other organisations. While other groups wasted time discussing procedure and constitutional matters, there was no discussion of the organisation by the members of the B.W.I. They simply did the job they had set out to do. While the Biafra Union was concerned with funds, the B.W.I. was concerned with people.

Its relationship with the former body was an independent one. It did not wish to encroach on the Union: and was not likely to do so. Neither did it encroach on the activities of local unions, although the experience of members seem to have differed somewhat on this point. While the Secretary stressed the need for caution where local unions are concerned, the President is confident that cooperation in particular cases can be facilitated by a division of labour, as in the funeral case quoted earlier. There is evidence, indeed, that local unions are glad to be relieved of some of their welfare obligations. An informant who supports this view described the case of a local man who became mentally ill in Brighton. The union hoped that his Old Boys' Association would take on the case, but they did not, so the town union was obliged to bring him to London and ship him home to Nigeria. Judging from the numerous requests for help received by the B.W.I. in cases of hospitalization and similar personal difficulties, the danger of antagonising other welfare agencies is not a real one.

The B.W.I. has a strongly supportive attitude towards organisations which subscribe to the same ends as itself. One in particular, the Biafra Association of Europe, deserves mention as a body which materialised after the war in order to perpetuate the struggle for an independent existence. The attitude of the B.W.I. is not one of unmitigated support, however, for in style and tactics, and in specific objectives, differences between the two organisations become apparent.

The B.A.E., like the B.W.I., consists of men who are not seasoned politicians or activists in other voluntary associations. It was founded in August 1970 by about a dozen men, most of them young, who were strongly committed to the values of unity. Several of them had suffered personally the loss of a close relative in the war. They were firmly convinced of the need for continuing protection of their people in Nigeria within the framework of an independent state, and were highly emotional about the wrongs they had suffered and were still suffering. The precise objectives of the association are difficult to define, since they are expressed in the rhetorical language of Black Power and anti-imperialism. Specific aims include the release of detainees, the distribution of information about the situation in Biafra, and the raising of funds and of the level of consciousness among Biafrans by means of dances,

The first objective - the release of political detainees - had not been realised when the association was investigated in 1971, because the B.A.E. had not apparently, been able to supply the exact names and locations of detainees when asked to do so. The second and third endeavours had met with varying degrees of success. Literature was being distributed at B.W.I. dances in the shape of pamphlets which contained lengthy quotations from foreign newspapers about the situation in Biafra, and exhortations to Biafrans in London to remember what they had fought for. A dance attended in the course of fieldwork attracted very little support, largely, it seems, because people were reluctant to be associated with

an organisation which openly identified itself with Biafra and was hence subversive in Nigerian terms. The occasion was used, like all public social events, to advertise other activities. An individual distributed leaflets concerning the forthcoming dance of a local union and retreated hastily to the bar where he remained in obscurity for the rest of the evening. Tha failure of the evening was both a surprise and a disappointment to the organisers.

The general impact of the Biafra Association of Europe in the community seems to have been slight. Few people have heard of the organisation, and on being acquainted with the facts often dismiss it as an attempt by the 'old politicians' to make money.[1]

As far as the members of the B.W.I. are concerned, the general aims of the organisation are acceptable if slightly obscure, but the B.A.E. people are too emotional and indiscrete in their tactics. Nonetheless, the B.W.I. is prepared to support B.A.E. functions and invite its members to cooperate in major welfare projects.

Although the B.A.E. has attracted little support or interest in the Ibo community, it has a place in the analysis of the post-war situation. It provides a measure of the general feeling about national organisations after the war. It illustrates the pronounced reaction against organised activity inspired by a symbol which had had such potency only twelve months before. The leaders of the movement are, it has been suggested, marginal individuals in the sense that they have not hitherto been noted for their activities in voluntary organisations. They are largely unknown in political circles and cannot, therefore, easily mobilise support on a large scale. It is pertinent to ask how people in the other category,

1. Certain of the 'old politicians' - led by a former president of the Biafra Union, did in fact form an organisation called Resurgence, whose objectives were sufficiently vague for it to be categorised as either Nigerian or Biafran. This, said an informant, was a deliberate attempt to take advantage of any situation which might occur in the future. It was typical of the opportunist outlook of pre-war politicians. A dance held by this organisation in May 1971 was a failure and the organisers suffered a considerable financial loss.

the war-time politicians, have behaved since January 1970. Before attempting to answer this question, however, the account of pro-Biafran organisations or war-time survivals must be concluded with mention of a recent development along the same lines.

The Ibo International Council was launched in July 1971 at a public meeting in London. Its founder members are a group of people who got to know each other during the war and share the same outlook on political matters. This is the view that the war effort was mismanaged by London Ibo politicians, whose actions were motivated by a selfish desire to serve their own interests. The Ibo International Council drew its early support from Biafrans in the provinces, where the Biafra Union continued to function quite independently after the war. There are branches of the Council in Glasgow, Hull, Liverpool and Manchester as well as in London.

The Ibo International Council stands for the promotion of Ibo culture, welfare and education. Its constitution was drafted by a B.W.I. man and its name proposed by the B.W.I. contingent. (The ideological agreement between the B.W.I., B.A.E. and Biafra Union in the north of England is manifested in the attendance by the two London associations at the central executive meetings of the Biafra Union of the northern cities.) Membership is open only to organisations. Individuals cannot join directly but as members of one of the constituent associations. In pursuit of its aim the Council is willing to cooperate with any other group or person.

In some respects the Council resembles the old Ibo State Union, disbanded by General Ironsi after the first military coup in Nigeria in January 1966, together with other ethnic associations and political parties. That too had been based on other organisations as component units, and existed to promote Ibo culture welfare and education. It is not clear at this stage whether the Ibo International Council has the political implications of the Ibo State Union.

Its impact on the Ibo community in London appears to have been slight. The ideological concensus which inspired its formation in 1971 appears to enjoy greater prominence in the northern cities of Britain than in London, where the

members of the B.W.I. ANd B.A.E. are alone in their commitment to Ibo unity and solidarity. Very few people, again, had heard of the Council either before or after its launching. The reaction of informants on learning of its existence in the course of interviews is one of scepticism. They are doubtful of its success in the existing climate of disillusionment and of reluctance to associate with any potentially subversive organisation. They are doubtful of the wisdom of such a venture so soon after the war when people's energies for collective action are spent, and attention is directed towards solving personal financial problems with a view to returning to Nigeria.

At best, the Ibo International Council is a marginal organisation which can be expected to gain ground as time goes on, achieving eventually the strength and support of the Ibo State Union. At worst, it is another of the war-time organisations which, like the B.A.E. can expect little public support and will disappear as most of the others did when they had outlived their usefulness.

If popular support has been witheld from organisations which recall the recent struggle neither has it been given to those which stand for the opposite principle: a rapid reincorporation into the political system of Nigeria. A handful of people proclaimed themselves members of the newly formed East Central State Union the day after Biafra collapsed. This group, too, is marginal in the sense that it is viewed with contempt by the majority of Ibos for the ease with which its members transferred their allegiance to the Nigerian government, and their indecent haste to establish themselves as leaders of the new movement. By the end of the field-work period more people were persuaded of the inevitability of such an organisation, though they were no more attracted to the original leadership than before.

Although there was clearly one recognised East Central State Union in mid-1971 the post-war period started with a contest between two rival groups claiming the title. One was led by an Ibo from Onitsha town who had been consistently pro-Nigerian throughout the war. He had in fact formed a United Nigeria Ibo Union, which had drawn limited support from other Onitsha town Ibos. (The Ibos in Onitsha

town have a tradition of origin which links them with the Western Ibos and they regard themselves as more akin to these people than to the Eastern Ibos). At the end of the war he sought to extend his area of influence by using his Eastern Ibo friends and made his brother-in-law the official leader of the group. This man, who was remotely related to the Administrator of the East Central State, was unknown in political circles in London, but the founder of the group recommended him to the Nigerian High Commisioner as 'the only man who can unify the Ibos after the war.' The group also included the vice-president of the Action Committee of the Nigerian Students' Union, created at the outbreak of the war to preserve Nigerian unity.

The other group consisted of Ibos who had been staunchly pro-Biafran during the war but rapidly switched to the Federal side when the Biafrans were defeated. Its leader was a middle-aged man who had been in Britain since the early 1950s and was well known for his political activities which took the conventional pragmatic form. His collaborators included two other 'old politicians', equally well known for their pre-war activities in national political organisations. One, who became the group's secretary, had been a former publicity secretary for Azikiwe, the former president of Nigeria. The other had worked for Dr. Okpara, the first premier of the Eastern Region. All three had involved themselves in Biafran politics in London. The President had for some time been the Chairman of the Divisional Assembly.

In 1970 the two groups sought to extend their influence among the Ibos and gain recognition in official circles as the official student organisation for the East central State, and hence worthy of financial support.. The political obscurity and good connections of the first leader described above put him in a favourable position over his rival, whose support for Biafra had been active and unconcealed. However, the former group was beset by internal dissention, vascillation and quarreling over offices, and after some initial progress over

its rival it faded from the scene in 1971. This was not before the rivalry had become the concern of a wider selection of the community. In August 1970 a Reconciliation Committee had been formed to solve the conflict between the two groups and established an official organisation representative of wider interests. The committee was set up by the last secretary and president of the Divisional Assembly, on the invitation of both parties to the dispute. A Nigerian politician, related by marriage to one of the committee members, was called in as an elder statesman to give advice. In November 1970 the committee produced a lengthy report which recommended that a new East Central State Union executive committee should be formed with representatives from each Division and from the two rival groups. It was accepted by the Unitsha group but turned down by the other.

It was the other group, in fact, led by the former chairman of the Biafran Divisional Assembly, which was gaining ground at the time of fieldwork. The account of its history and operation supplied by the President may be quoted to show the principles underlying its formation. "Immediately after the war was over I said there was no alternative to rejoining Nigeria. I formed the East Central State Union the day after it ended, and removed all the Biafran things from the room," (a reference to the flags, photographs, maps and other symbols bearing Biafran colours and the head of its leader)"and replaced them with Nigerian ones. There has been opposition to the union in London, but I think that in the true spirit of sportsmanship you should fight when you are winning and accept defeat when defeated. Just watch your former opponents closely in case there is a repeat performance. In fact I have found true magnaminity among the Nigerians....."

The motto of the Union is 'Unity and Coexistence'. It has a membership of about twenty and is formally organised with an executive committee and specialist committee for economic planning, education and research, relief and rehabilitation, publicity and information, and finance. There are plans to launch a Nigerian

Civil War Relief and Rehabilitation Trust, and a Project Development Scheme, 'to turn swords into ploughshares' and make use of Ibo talents abroad. Membership of the union is open to any individual citizen of the East Central State. Potential members are contacted personally. (Some have been offered inducements in the form of offices).

The activities of the union include receptions for visiting ministers, send-off parties for members returning home, and participation in social events staged by the Nigeria Union of Students. These gatherings are made the occasion of repeated justifications for the union's existence and exhortations to support Nigerian unity. All references to the recent strife is played down, to an extent which seems remarkable. A speech given by the secretary at a send-off party held for the assistant secretary in September 1971 made reference to ' a slight complication which occurred in our country a few years ago', which had caused the departing member and others like him to postpone their return to Nigeria. To this there was achorus of agreement from the assembled company (about twenty-five Ibo men and women). The political adviser, who had risen to pour libation solemnly declared to loud applause that the Union was here to stay. 'When political boundaries change, we change....' The same pragmatic theme was aired at a reception held in May 1972 for the Administrator of the East Central State, Asika, on a visit to London. When a union official proudly proclaimed that 'we did not put all our eggs into one basket', in reference to the covert support offered by the leaders to the Federal Government during the war(the president, then the Chairman of the Divisional Assembly, is said to have held a secret party for the Administrator's wife when she visited London!) abuse was heard from the floor of the house. A young man, provoked beyond endurance, shouted that Asika was a renegade, and fighting broke out, whereupon the police were called to restore order.

Support for the events staged by the East Central State Union is limited, and even fewer of those who attend actually belong to the union. The send-off party for the assistant secretary had, by the end of the evening, attracted about twenty Ibomen, several women, some non-African tenants living in the house, and two executive members of the Nigerian Students' Union. A reception held in August 1971 for two visiting ministers was no more successful. Of the forty people present, only 15-20 were Ibos, excluding members of the Nigerian and East Central State Unions. An interesting assortment of people came to these functions. On rare occasions they included individuals who had held executive positions in Biafran political organisations. Men who were unwilling to be seen associating with the group discreetly sent their wives to find out how things stood. The wife of a highly respected Owerri man was encountered with great consistency at events organised by the mushrooming organisations. She attended the dance held by 'Resurgence', a pro-Biafran group, and the send-off party for the assistant secretary of the East Central State Union. Her husband was present at the Biafra Welfare International Dance in 1971 and at the reception held in October 1971 to mark the eleventh Independence Anniversary of Nigeria. Between them they had surveyed both ends of the political spectrum and were in a position to place their support most effectively.

The occasion of the Independence Day celebration in 1971 attracted thirty or forty Ibos among the several hundred Nigerians. They included, of course, the supporters of the East Central State Union but also men and women whose support for Biafra had been consistent and active. Their gradual involvement in Nigerian affairs did not mean, however, that they subscribed to the views of the East Central State Union or approve of its activities. Attitudes towards this organisation are by and large condemnatory. Individuals like the President and his collaborators are viewed with scorn and contempt, largely on account of their inconsistency and their tactics. The view of an informant who was active

in pre-war and war-time politics but withdrew completely from public life after the war sums up the feeling of many Ibos about the status of the union and its prospects for success. "The Union does not attract support," he said, "because the leadership inspires no confidence. It sonsists of the old politicians who no longer count, and who are regarded as clowns. They have not learnt from British politics, despite being in Britain, and are still trying to bamboozle the prople. They worship money and personalities. They say bluntly that they are in politics for what they can get out of it, and that this is the only type of politics they know." The East Central State Union, in the opinion of this informant, was formed by people who are concerned simply with recognition and office. No self-respecting Ibo will have anything to do with them.

This view is echoed by other informants, who point out that although the President is a clever politician who can create contacts in high places, he cannot call a general meeting of Ibos. His activity is ill-judged and mistimed for no such organisation can enjoy support so soon after the war. Although the people are no longer burning their passports and declaring that they will never return to Nigeria, they are as yet uncommitted to the idea of an East Central State. In 1971 it could be said that the Ibos had acquiesced to the Government but that it had gained neither their confidence nor their support. They wished only to be left alone to restore what had been lost. That meant devoting their time completing courses of study and using their salaries to acquire property and other forms of tangible wealth.

Despite reluctance to subscribe to the first East Central State Union there are signs that another section of the community is beginning to think in terms of the need for a properly constituted union. Partly this development has been forced upon them by external events: the inevitable wooing of students abroad by Nigerian politicians, seeking to extend their base of support. This process started directly after the war when individuals who subscribed to the old kind of politics quickly settled the score with the Federal Government, became

convinced Federalists, and hastened to attribute blame for the disaster where it was most convinient: at the door of the vanquished Biafran leadership. When the search for political support brought them to Britian, however, their claims that "Ojukwu misled the people" carried little weight with the London audience. The Ibos in London were not interested in scapegoats. By October 1971, however, when another eminent person, the Chairman of the Nigerian Shipping line, arrived in Britain "to see how our people are getting on", old political networks were reactivated to draw an audience. To the annoyance of the East Central State Union, they were not formally approached and invited to participate in the discussion. To one of them who came in a different capacity the visitor explained that he had been told by another student that no such union existed. In the course of the discussion, which lasted until the early hours, the student in question,with the concurrence of several formerly active Biafrans, repeated his assertion that no proper East Central State Union existed. There were simply a set of factions, he said, What people now wanted was a properly constituted uhion.

Some two years after the war, people are beginning to emerge from the shock of defeat. Young men with political ambitions which before the war were expressed in N.C.N.C. and Nigerian student politics in London, and during the war in Biafran politics, are beginning to seek a new outlet within the framework of post-war Nigeria.

Against this development must be balanced the activities of the other groups who carefully harbour the concept of Biafra. The latter are equally few in number but express perhaps the inclinations of the silent majority of Ibos in London. Nothing can be said definitely on this issue. The point to note here is that the activists of both persuasions enjoy only minority support. The majority of Ibos in London, to judge from their response to calls for public demonstrations of commitment to one view or the other, are uninterested in collective action on either side. In short, the malaise which has afflicted most national associations since January 1970 indicates a fundamental change

in behaviour and outlook in the Ibo community.

Local Organisation The picture of formal organisations is not complete without an examination of local unions. (Throughout the thesis, 'Local' is used in opposition to national and refers to communities of origin in Nigeria, not to place of residence in London). The aim of this section is to see to what extent the organisations based on community of origin in Nigeria have shared the fate of the national associations. Information was obtained for almost forty town, district or clan unions, and a dozen Divisional and Provincial unions. The first group - town, clan and district - represent the lowest level of organisation. Town and clan unions are those whose members are commonly united by ties of descent from a mythical ancestor. District unions consist of people from a particular locality whose various towns and clans are not sufficiently represented in London for separate organisations. The Divisional and Provincial unions represent a higher level of organisation related to larger political and administrative units. An overlap of the two categories - the local and the Divisional - occurs in respect of some larger clans and districts which became Divisions during the war, such as Mbaise, Nkanu and Etiti.

The termination of activities when the war ended was most abrupt at the Divisional level. Many of the Divisional unions had, in any case, been in existence for less than two years, for they had been called into being by the imposition of the Divisional Assembly above them as a means of mobilising local support. When the Assembly ceased to exist and Divisions lost their political significance the unions had no reason to continue. There was, simply, 'nothing to talk about'. The constituent units in the war-time divisions no longer had common interests to defend in a national context. It is illuminating to consider in detail the fate of unions in a particular area, Owerri, whose leaders, more ambitious than most, attempted to revive public interest. To understand the changing configuration of interests in the period in question it is helpful to start with some recent history.

In the early days of colonial rule there had been five provinces in the eastern part of Nigeria, of which two - Owerri and Onitsha - covered a large part of Iboland.[1] On the attainment of regional independence the five provinces were subdivided, becoming eleven. The former Owerri Province now covered Owerri Province and Umuahia Province. Owerri Province consisted of three Divisions: Owerri, Orlu and Okigwi. In 1959 Owerri students in London formed the Owerri Divisional Union, which petered out in the following year. It was reformed in 1961 with an enrolled membership of about thirty out of a possible six hundred. It contained Ibos from sic of the seven districts in the Division: Mbaitoli, Ikeduru, Mbaise, Oratta, Ohaji and Ngor-Okpala. Oguta, the seventh, had cultural links with Western Iboland and had always identified strongly with the mid-west and Onitsha Ibos, sharing their stereotype of the Eastern Ibos as 'bush people'. Oguta had a strong union of its own.

In 1963 there was a change in leadership and a recruitment campaign increased the membership to about 250. The appeal was made in terms of Owerri interests at home and abroad. At home, Owerri people constituted a minority which was suffering discrimination, having no strong political representation in the regional government. In London an Owerri man had recently died alone in hospital, unknown to his fellows. Despite the success of the campaign the membership began to fall again and in the following two years (1963-4) was reduced to seventy. Average attendance remained at about thirty. The two reasons for the decline were related: people did not see the benefit to themselves in belonging; and smaller unions were growing up within the Division, Mbieri Town Union (in Mbaitoli district,) and Mbaise District Union.

Mbieri Town Union was ostensibly cultural, designed to cater for the social and cultural needs of its sixty members. The real basis for recruitment was generally understood to be the need to promote the political interests of the Mbieri community at home in relation to its neighbours. Mbaise District Union

1. See Appendix 3, Map 2.

developed from similar origins. Mbaise, a district consisting of seven clans, said to be the most densely populated area in Africa, had the largest proportion of Owerri people in London - 250. The desire in Mbaise was growing for Divisional status, an aspiration shared by the students abroad. Feelings in London were fanned by the visit of an Mbaise cabinet Minister, In 1963-4 Mbieri Town and Mbaise District Unions grew at the expense of the Owerri Divisional Union.

In 1967 the Eastern Region seceeded to become Biafra. The existing districts were turned into Divisions, the Divisions into Provinces, and the Provinces ceased to operate as administrative units. Within the new Owerri Province there were now four Divisions: Mbaise, Mbaitoli-Ikeduru, Ogûta and Owerri. All four Divisional Unions sent representatives to the Divisional Assembly, the national body which coordinated fundraising activities at a local level. The Divisional Unions represented the basic units of organisation in the new state. Owerri Provincial Union lapsed, though its executive committee was not disbanded.

When the secession collapsed in January 1970 the East Central State came into effect. (It had existed on paper since mid-1967) The key administrative unit became, once again, the Province (pre-war Division), although some confusion exists on this point.[1] Within Owerri Province the four Divisions, Mbaise, Mbaitoli-Ikeduru, Oguta and Owerri, ceased to function as separate units. The fate of the Divisional Unions in London, however, has been mixed.

Mbaitoli-Ikeduru, a creation of the war, has quietly reverted to its pre-war state. Ikeduru interests are expressed through the Ikeduru Union and Mbaitoli interests through the meeting of the dominant town, Mbieri. Although Ikeduru is simply a district, whose population is united by virtue of their geographical proximity, its many towns each have a few representatives in London in whose interest it is to cooperate. One of the first public social events held after

1. A Mbaise man has been informed by relations at home that the 'county council' (war-time Division) is the crucial unit and that leaders at the county level can go to the central administration for gants and aid. The general view, however, is that provinces are still what matters, though little interest is shown in the situation at all.

the war was in fact a send-off party given by Ikeduru Union to celebrate the appointmentto a post with the World Bank of a young Ikeduru man. Mbieri Union, for its part, continues to handle matters of local interest. Together, however, the two unions have 'nothing to discuss'. There is no longer any unifying principle which justifies common action, and consequently no meetings have been called since the end of the war.

Mbaise Divisional Union has declined for reasons which are not directly connected with the fall of Biafra. The union had enjoyed an active life in the early sixties. It was eventually undermined by repeated internal conflicts which developed before the war ended. A caretaker committee which was incumbent at the time of Biafra's collapse remained for several months when attempts were made to reestablish the union on its previous, secure footing. The attempts have failed, however, for a number of reasons. A member who ceased to show interest himself points out that although the Mbaise people know each other personally they no longer come together as a community, even at Christmas. Intensive interaction of that kind was needed only in the war when people were afraid of the future, and drew support from each other's company. They also needed to hear bulletins from townsmen who were newly arrived from Biafra. After the war these factors are absent. Fear has been mitigated, and people come and go all the time, so that formal gatherings to listen to reports of Mbaise's progress are unnecessary. This informant, and others from Mbaise, are beginning to meet on a more local basis. People from the seven clans in the area recognise that they have separate interests, particularly the need to promote economic, and educational development to restore the lost prosperity to their own towns. Meetings proceed, therefore, on the basis of local clans, and general gatherings of Mbaise Union, which restarted in 1971, draw only a minority of the total membership. An election held in May 1971 is reported to have drawn only 12 or 13 members, as a result of which only five officials were elected. The President has since said that he intends to resign since the union lacks popular support.

Fifteen months after the war activity of a desultory nature began again in Owerri Divisional Union. The Union executive had continued to meet throughout 1970 but had called no general meetings because it was felt that people were emotionally unready. The ordinary Owerri man had spent the months since the war in getting news from home, taking stock of the situation and sending money to help bereaved relatives. As much as £500 was sent by the better off. People were 'disgusted with meetings' which now seemed purposeless. However, Owerri activists were beginning to feel that the time had come to start again, to re-elect a new executive and plan to reorganise. In April 1971 therefore a letter was sent to a representative sample of Owerri people (on the basis that many people were likely to have changed their addresses in the preceeding months and that those contacted would tell their friends about the meeting) pointing out that " it is fifteen months, yes, fifteen months! since this union last met." The letter went on:"After this introspective period this could conceivably be the right time to try again." The agenda for the proposed meeting fell into three parts: "1. Picking up, if we can, where we stopped. 2. Open Session. 3. Election, if desired, of a new executive." The acting secretary concluded his message with a comment: "Need I emphasise the importance of this meeting - it might be a springboard or, if no interest is shown, the beginning of the end."

In the event, very little interest was shown by the general members. The meeting, held in June 1971, attracted twenty members out of a possible three hundred. The people present seemed mainly to represent two factions: the incumbents in office and those who sought to depose them.[1] Later in the year a dance was held to raise funds for an unspecified purpose. Again attendance was poor, partly because the weather was very bad and the hall was inaccessible, and because arrangements for a license to sell alcohol had fallen through at the last

1. An attempt was made at participant observation but I was unable to gain access to the meeting. My request was considered while I waited outside and was eventually rejected after heated debate. Accounts of the meeting and of the progress of the union, were obtained from several active members.

minute. The lack of support was consistent however with the generally low rate of interest in the union's affairs and uncertainty about its aims. The view was expressed that a union of this sort, which did not represent local (i.e. town) interests, was run by selfinterested individuals and the dance had been organised for personal gain.

As the union's objectives became clear, individual welfare assumed priority. But on this basis its chances of success were slender. Such an objective duplicated the work of the local unions, which had the advantage of a firm articulating principle, kinship. No one would be willing to contribute money for the welfare of individuals who were comparative strangers. Sceptics, who reflected the feelings of the silent majority, maintained that an Owerri Divisional Union could not succeed since there was no unifying factor. The members were drawn from different clans and had nothing in common. They did not belong to the same moral community since there was neither a myth of origin defining them as kin, nor external opposition in relation to which they might feel unified.

As far as one faction was concerned, the most salient argument against the revival of Owerri Divisional Union was the fact that the unit it represented no longer existed in the East Central State. The new administrative structure was based on provincial units equivalent to the war-time provinces. This group (which included members of the executive of the Provincial Union which had suspended activities during the war) there-fore planned to revive Owerri Provincial Union, in accordance with administrative developments in Nigeria. In their view, people were fully aware of the existence of the East Central State and were agreed that in future energy should be concentrated therein. It seemed rational, therefore, to phase out the Divisional unions, though not to exclude them altogether. The Divisional system had satisfied personal aspirations for leadership during the war and enabled each section to participate in decisions which affected their interests. The promoters of Owerri Provincial

Union planned, therefore, to appease office holders in the four relevant Divisional unions -Owerri, Mbaise, Mbaitoli and Ikeduru (now separated), by a system of proportional representation. Each Division should send two representatives to the Provincial executive, which would include also about twenty ex-officio members drawn proportionately from all four.

The intention was soon challenged by the new president of Owerri Divisional Union, and the leaders of Mbaise and Mbaitoli also declared their lack of support for the idea. They saw no common cause around which the various interests in Owerri could gather. Before the war, they felt, Owerri had had something to fight for. It did not any longer.

By autumn 1971 there was not much going on at either the Divisional or Provincial levels in Owerri. The Divisional Union had been shaken by the departure of its president for a job in America and the imminent departure of its secretary. Since these officials had, in any case, been the strongest force behind the union's revival, it seemed inevitable that it should give way to local unions. The Provincial union also had had difficulty getting started. In the opinion of an organiser, people were reluctant to become involved for two reasons. They were self-interested and money conscious; and they no longer saw the unions as a channel to higher office in Nigeria, as they had been during the time of civilian rule.

The experience of the Owerri Divisional and Provincial Unions has been shared by others whose leaders were hopeful of a revival. Some have tried, therefore, to reconstitute their unions on a different basis. In 1971 Mbano Divisional Union was about to be relaunched as a savings club. The organisers planned regular meetings with monthly contributions which would be invested in a business. Its leaders recognised that individuals were preoccupied with personal financial problems and were likely to be more receptive to the idea of an organisation which helped to promote their personal interests. Most leaders of war-time Divisions, however, have not tried to reorganise. They are as 'weary of politics' as are their rank and file.

The disaffection for organised activity is visible at the lower level of organisation as well, though not to the same extent. Information obtained in respect of about forty town, clan and district unions suggests considerable variety in the degree of formal organisation and extent of individual participation, in the scope of activities and in the range of current issues.

In 1970 general interest tended to be minimal. In some cases this followed an intensification of activity immediately after the collapse of Biafra, when the fate of their families at home was uppermost in people's minds and some sort of collective action seemed desirable. Such was the experience of Obosi Progress Society which had enjoyed an attendance of about 60% of its 54 members during the war and an even higher percentage immediately afterwards. Meetings had previously been held at two monthly intervals for the discussion of events, the circulation of letters received from home and the selection of delegates for the Divisional Union. Since then, however, attendance has fallen sharply to a point at which meetings have become untenable. Two were planned, and all members circularised well in advance. The second of them, held in November 1970, failed to attract more than a dozen people. No more meetings have been called therefore, although the organisers had hoped to launch a development project to restore Obosi's former prosperity. However, members of the executive decided that the state of uncertainty at home made plans for development impossible. Since the abolition of ethnic associations in 1966 there had been no parent union in Obosi, to which the London branch could have sent the money collected. It was not clear, either, what plans for development the state authorities had. More important, however, Obosi people in London could not be relied upon for support. Their energies were taken up with individual acts of assistance to their kin in Obosi, and they were no longer interested in collective action.

Like the Obosi Progress Society, many local unions have abandoned general business meetings. In some cases their war-time executive have continued to meet from time to time or communicate by telephone. Often this has been sufficient to maintain the level of activity which existed before the war. Oraifite Union, for instance, has restored meetings on an annual basis for the election of an executive committee which organises the various activities of the union. Attendance at the two A.G.M.s held since the war have been high - 25 out of 30 attending. More regular meetings are felt to be unnecessary since people meet informally almost every week and can exchange information by these means. The executive committee confers privately and has the authority to organise activities such as burials and send-off parties. On such occasions spontaneous assistance is forthcoming from the rest of the members in preparing the drinks and food, arranging the hall and clearing up afterwards.

In short, most unions have experienced laxity in attendance at general meetings since the war and like Obosi Progress Society and Oraifite Union have ceased to hold them altogether. Even annual general meetings do not attract the members they used to. The Newi A.G.M., held in September 1971, was attended by about 20 people out of a possible seventy.

Against this it must be noted that a small number - about a fifth of the forty unions investigated - continue to hold regular business meetings, and it is worth examining these. The meetings are used to organise individual welfare and relief; to arrange send-off parties for qualified people returning home, and social activities to mark certain festivals; to plan development projects for the home town, and to disseminate information. Welfare activities include the repatriation of mentally sick individuals and the families of the deceased. Where repatriation is not desired other arrangements are made, such as the transportation of a wife from Nigeria, or regular assistance to a bereaved family which has lost its breadwinner. Development projects include the sending

of books and ballpoint pens for school children and plans to develop the community life of the home area. In 1970 a number of people from three contiguous villages in a parish in northern Iboland came together for this purpose. The Development Union they established was designed to promote the long-term development of the home area by means of new schools, markets and community events such as athletics matches. The villages of the twenty-five members were related by kinship but more particularly by their close proximity to the regional capital Enugu, nine miles away. The aim of the union was to prevent further depopulation in their area.

Where an active union exists, its energies are usually deployed in several directions. Thus Ngwa Clan Union fulfills welfare, development, social and information functions. It sent a delegate home immediately after the war to find out what was going on, and continues to circulate information about the state of affairs in Aba, the Division. At a recent meeting, for instance, a set of government information bulletins about developments in the East Central State was handed around by the cousin of a member, on a visit from Nigeria. The Union gives financial assistance in time of need. After a road accident in 1970 in which the father of a family was killed by a hit-and-run driver (no compensation can be obtained in such cases) the eldest daughter took a job and manages to support the other children with the help of the clan. Assistance of this sort is facilitated by a monthly subscription of one pound for each single person and £1.50 per couple. Energies are deployed also for the development of the home area. It was decided that a collective project was a priority since only one eighth of the families at home are represented by sons and daughters abroad who can assist them financially. A levy was made of ten pounds per person for the purchase of books, food and medicines. An important activity which may be mentioned in passing, although its proper place is in a later chapter, is the settlement of disputes. The union in theform of its president, involves itself

only in those cases which are of interest to the membership as a whole, as being likely to affect their standing with other clans. These are cases in which two members of the union threaten to cause a breach of the peace. Social events, finally, are planned for special occasions, including the departure of qualified members and the Christmas festival.

Social activities take the form of parties at Christmas or the New Year, and in midsummer. The members gather in the home of the president or other leading official to eat, drink and dance. Others commemorate traditional festivals in customary ways. Every September the Aro Union has conventionally celebrated the Ikeji (New Yam) Festival. The occasion includes traditional dances. In 1970 the celebration was ommited altogether, members being in no mood for conviviality so soon after the war. There were plans for holding it as usual in 1971, but without the traditional dances. A similar event takes place in various Awka unions, such as the Onwasato Festival Dance held by Enugu Ukwu Union in September 1971. Special guests were people whose mothers had been born in the town but had married men outside it.

The absence of the festive spirit in 1970, which inhibited the resumption of traditional celebrations in the Arochuku community, was noticable also in 1971. A union president who had the previous month entertained twenty fellow members at his house commented that the drain on emotional and financial resources of the war had not entirely disappeared. The conviviality of pre-war days had not been restored and people found it difficult to meet for no other purpose than to eat and drink.

Even in the apparently active unions then, events are not altogether back to normal. Attendance has not achieved war-time levels partly because the traditional penalties for persistent absence - fines - are ineffective and traditional sanctions - a deputation to his home followed by a report to his family in Nigeria, ostracism etc. - are ignored. Before considering why this is so, the account of current activities in the few active unions may be concluded with a brief description of current issues in some general meetings held recently.

The matters discussed in the recent meetings of four local unions, some eighteen months after the war, suggest a preoccupation with technicalities. The ten members of Umuopara Clan Union, meeting in the house of a member on a Sunday afternoon in August 1971, discussed the 'bye-law' that all children should be registered. The purpose of their registration was to safeguard them in time of accident. If they were recorded as an Umuopara son or daughter well in advance the union would take responsibility in the absence of the father. If a child was unregistered the union would hot help. The point at issue in the meeting was the age of the first contribution the children should pay, as registered members. (The fee was £2 per month). Some members favoured payment on leaving the secondary school, while others suggested graduation from university as a suitable time to begin. After several hours of discussion a solution was reached. First payment should be made when a young person entered full-time employment.

A similar matter, with different implications, was the subject for discussion at meetings of Arondizogu Union, held early in 1972. The dispute concerned the registration of women. There were two categories of women involved. The first included wives of Arondizogu men, who had hitherto enjoyed the benefits of membership through their husbands. The problem of registration as individual members in their case was that not all of them were employed and some men might therefore have to pay double registration fees. The other category consisted of Arondizogu women who had married men outside the town, and thereby ceased to be active members of their own union. They retained an interest in Arondizogu affairs however, and it seemed appropriate that they should pay the registration fee for the benefit of membership. The problem in this case was the disruptive effect on families of the parents belonging to different unions. What would happen to the children, argued the opponents of registration, if the wife said she was going to attend her meeting, and the husband wanted to attend his? The issue was unresolved when the research ended.

Other controversial issues in local unions related to the name in one case and the question of a patron in another. Aro Union consisted mainly of people from Arochuku but had until the war been attended also by Aros whose forfathers had migrated from the town and established settlements in other parts of Iboland. Among them were the people of Aro Ndizogu whose founding ancestors had migrated from the village of Amankwu in Arochuku many generations ago. They had introduced themselves in meetings of the Union as Amankwu Aro, and it had been their custom to vote on issues as a bloc. During the war a separate union had been formed to represent the interests of the Arondizogu people in London, though many continued to hold membership of both unions, and some to attend the Aro union. After the war an executive committee member of the latter suggested that it should cease to be known as the Aro Union since it no longer attracted all the Aros but only Arochuku people. The motion to rename it Arochuku Union was opposed but a countermotion was lost and the name was changed in July 1971.

These then were some of the issues of the moment in Union meetings about eighteen months after the war. They continue to occupy the attention of members as being matters which affect their interests in London. For those who refuse to attend, however, it is the protracted discussion of such issues which makes the meetings seem irrelevant and a waste of time.

From this account of the activities of certain unions which have retained their vitality, questions arise as to why some unions are successful, while others are not, and how the activemembers are distinguished from those who refuse to become involved. In terms of variables such as age and marital status, level of education, type of occupation and level of income, no clear distinction emerges between active members and the rest. Neither is it possible to draw a distinction in terms of objective criteria, between the few unions which hold regular and well attended business and social meetings and those which exist only in the form of a more or less active executive committee. If a differentiating factor

exists at all it appears to be the simple one of size: the optimum size of local community for an active union is thirty.

Taken as a whole, formal organisations are seen to lie on a continuum, ranging from moderate vitality to total inactivity. The rate of decline is negatively related to size and level of organisation, and preoccupation with political matters. Thus the central political organisations which were national in scope and concerned mainly with the defence of national interests - the Biafra Union and Divisional Assembly - and recent developments on the same level - the East Central State Union and Biafra Association of Europe - have disappeared or been unable to win popular support. At the intermediate level of organisation, the Divisional unions set up to defend territorial interests have experienced a general decline. At the lowest level of organisation the voluntary associations retain some vitality, their major preoccupations being individual welfare and social activity, personal savings and development of the home town.

LEVEL OF ORGANISATION	EXAMPLES	FUNCTIONS	FATE
Central/ Ntional	Biafra Union Div. Assembly Biafra Ass. of Europe E.C.State Union	Political, defence of national interest.	Complete disappearance: failure of new organisations to develop.
Intermediate	Divisional Unions Provincial Unions	Political, defence of territorial interests .	General decline.
Local	Town, Clan District Unions	Welfare, social savings, development.	Some vitality, localised.

The aim of the present chapter has been to show that interest in organised activity within the community has slackened after the war. It remains to ask why this was so. Some explanation must be offered for what strikes the observer as a sharp reversal in the pattern of formal activities in the period under

consideration. The pattern of public apathy in political activities and preoccupations with private pursuits is also recognised by participants as a defining characteristic of social organisation in the post-war period. It is illuminating, therefore, to start with the subjective explanations of the situation.

Two factors emerge in the explanations offered by participants. The first is the disaffection for politics. The second is the strength of other(financial) commitments. The two are mutually reinforcing. The significance of these factors was perseived by the official hopeful of a revival of Owerri Provincial Union whose conclusion was that support was poor because people were to self-interested and money-conscious and because they no longer saw the unions as a channel to higher office in Nigeria.

There are in fact two subjective explanations for the decline in attendance figures since the war. One holds that the lull in popular interests is the result of a temporary despondency and will soon be displaced by a resurgence of interest and involvement. According to the other view there is simply no need for a formal structure of unions, and organised activities, in the context of post-war London. Failure to attend is not the result of despondency but simply the realisation that meetings no longer serve any purpose.

The main argument advanced in favour of meetings is that they enable people to get to know one another. Without them, it is said, one might pass a townsman in the street without knowing who he is. The implication is that each townsman is the other's main source of emotional and financial security. He will be held accountable by kin in Nigeria for coping with personal crises, and can be called upon for help and advice in time of need. People in favour of meetings see them as a forum for interaction between individuals with common interests. Fellow townspeople are those with whom one will have to work in the future, in deciding the affairs of the town. After the war the likelihood of settling in the home town appears strong, hence the need to know fellow

townspeople in London. As one eminent president put it, "These are the people with whom men like myself will have to live if Ibos are ever again forced to flee."

Against this it is argued that formal meetings are not necessary for people to know who their fellows are and to communicate with them. Links have been established during the war, and informal interaction continues in the shape of visits and telephone calls. As the one time secretary of Ndoki Union pointed out, members are still in touch with each other and know how to rally if the need arises. If he has not heard from a fellow Ndoki man for a week or two he telephones to ask whether all is well, whether there has been any news from home, and so on. Support can thus be mobilised rapidly for individuals who require it.

The argument that the meeting provides moral support in difficult circumstances is also less powerful after the war. Individuals are no longer under the same emotional strain, and news is freely available. Far from providing moral support, it is often felt that interaction with fellow townsmen in the context of a formal meeting sets up new pressures of competition, exposes one to malicious gossip and to the risk of involvement which is potentially damaging to one's interests. In the post-war economic circumstances, men setting up businesses and buying property seek privacy rather than publicity. Financial involvement with a clansman either as a tenant, landlord or business partner cannot easily be settled in court if it turns out badly. Business activities and the renewed efforts to complete courses of study or acquire additional qualifications offer a powerful reason for avoiding meetings. It is expensive both to pay subscriptions and give donations, and to entertain members when one's turn comes to offer one's house as a venue for the meeting. Protracted discussion, held at weekends and lasting often for three or four hours, furthermore, is regarded as a waste of valuable time.

The objective basis for the feeling that meetings are a waste of time and irrelevant to individual interests may lie in the economic circumstances of the Ibos after the war, and the pattern of response to them. It is in any case pertinent to ask to what extent economic activities after the war support the subjective explanations examined in the preceding pages.

Economic Organisation. The pattern of war-time activities in the economic sphere has persisted largely unaltered to the present time, some eighteen months after the collapse of Biafra. In 1971 less than one fifth of the men are engaged in full-time study. A quarter combine study with work, and over half do no studying at all. Even fewer of the women are full-time students. Just over a tenth fall into this category. Less than a fifth are following part-time courses. The majority, nearly three-quarters of the whole, are working. The rest are housewives who neither study nor work outside the home.

TABLE 3.1. Current Economic Activity in the Post-war Period, by Sex. (Source: Census 1971.)

Activity	Men		Women		TOTAL	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Study only	81	17	37	11	118	14
Work & Study	129	25	49	15	178	22
Work only	267	55	221	68	488	60
Housewife, unemployed	9	2	18	5	27	3
Not known	3	1	2	1	5	1
TOTAL	489	100	327	100	816	100

When current activity is correlated with year of arrival, a relationship emerges between the two variables. Over two thirds of the long established residents - men who have been in Britain for over twelve years - are working. Less than a tenth are studying full time. Among the most recent arrivals, only a third are working, while a quarter are full-time students. The distribution is given in the following table.

TABLE 3.2. Current Economic Activity of Ibo men in London by yyear of Arrival in Britain. (Source: Census 1971.)

Activity	1959		1960-3		1964-7[1]		1967-9		1970-2		TOTAL	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Study only	4	8	27	13	31	19	10	26	9	26	81	17
[2]Work & Study	10	21	50	24	55	34	8	20	6	18	129	25
[3]Work only	33	69	127	62	76	47	19	49	12	35	267	55
Unemployed	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	5	7	21	9	2
Not known	1	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1
TOTAL	48	100	206	100	162	100	39	100	34	100	489	100

Notes. 1. April 1967.
2. including in-service training - medicine, accountancy, insurance, banking, nursing, housing management, etc. where formal study and examinations are an integral part of the job.
3. including whose whose studies are completed, suspended or abandoned.

According to these figures, less than half of the Ibos are engaged in study of any kind. Over half are part of the working pepulation of London. The question arises as to how they fit into the occupational structure of the host society. In answering this question, use can be made of Desai's distinction between the internal and external economy of an Indian immigrant community.[1] In Desai's terms, the internal economy involves those people who make a living by supplying the community with certain services such as housing, and goods such as indigenous foodstuffs. Other people are employed in the external economy, in jobs which are part of the occupational structure of the host society.

Comparatively few Ibos are involved in the internal economy. Lawyers, solicitors, retailers, doctors, dressmakers and caterers do have Ibo clients but they do not rely on them for their income. As regards landlords, it is certainly the case that many Ibos let rooms in their houses to fellow Ibos and that some make a living out of property. However, it seems to be the case that the former use this largely as an additional income and a means of paying off the mortgage. In the case of multiple house owners tenants include non-Ibos as well as Ibos.

1. Desai, R. (1963)

A more important source of income is the external economy. In addition to private businesses which receive separate treatment below the Ibos engage in a wide variety of occupations, at all levels of skill and responsibility. They are concentrated in the service sector of industry,[1] as opposed to the extractive, manufacturing and construction areas. Their occupational distribution in terms of level of skill and responsibility is shown on page 233. The data included in the table are derived from the census conducted in the field, supplemented by information from the files of the Commonwealth Students' Children's Society. For reasons given in Appendix I and alluded to in the General Introduction, it is possible that the number of Ibos engaged in partly skilled and unskilled occupations is underrepresented here. In addition to the problem of meeting an complete cross section of the community, people are in general most unwilling to discuss the topic of work. This reluctance extends to fellow Ibos as much as to non-Ibos. An otherwise well-informed respondent who was able to give full details of marital status for his thirty fellow townsmen said he knew the occupations of only five or six of them. As another man put it, "people don't want to talk about their failure." In the competitive world of the Ibos, the problems encountered in the job market are not advertised.

Despite the weaknesses mentioned above, there is no reason to suppose that the percentage in Table 3.3 are wholly inaccurate.

The comparatively high percentage of men (10%) engaged in professional and high administrative activities is explained largely by the number of Ibo doctors working in Britain. According to a one-time president, the Biafra Medical Association of Great Britain had a membership exceeding one hundred. Over thirty general practitioners and hospital doctors of various ranks and specialisms were encountered in the course of fieldwork. Among the women, the high

1. South East Economic Planning Council 1967 p.81. The service sector includes gas, electricity and water; transport and communication; distributive trades; insurance, banking and finance; professional and scientific services; miscellaneous services; public administration and defence.

TABLE 3.3. Current Occupational Distribution of Ibo Men and Women in London. (Source: Census 1971).[1]

Occupational Group.	Men		Women		TOTAL	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Professional & High Administrative[2]	52	10	2	1	54	7
Intermediate[3]	146	30	127	39	273	33
Skilled non-manual[4]	103	22	79	24	182	22
Skilled manual[5]	52	10	40	12	92	11
Partly skilled/ unskilled[6]	44	9	18	5	62	8
None[7]	89	18	55	17	144	18
Not known	3	1	6	2	9	1
TOTAL	489	100	327	100	816	100

Notes. 1. The basis for classification into five occupational groups is the Registrar General's division of occupations into 5 social classes. This does not mean that the Ibos share this particular social ranking of occupations. Their system of evaluation is different and will be described in a later chapter on social stratification.
Certain additions have been made to the following categories where necessary, eg. nursing auxilliary, air hostess.

2. Professional and High Administrative. Doctors , lawyers, priests, senior Civil Servants, directors, lecturers, solicitors, professional engineers, architects, professional economists.

3. Intermediate Occupations. Insurance brokers, financial agents, journalists nurses, radiographers, therapists, primary/secondary school teachers, lab. assistants, computer programmers, work study engineers, office managers, bank clerks, housing managers, hospital administrators, social workers, librarians, assist. architects, research assistants, managers in engineering, surveyors, executive officers.

4. Skilled non-manual occupations. Clerks, typists, salesmen, draughtsmen, personal service workers, shop proprietors, punch-card operators, air hostesses, ticket office clerks.

5. Skilled Manual. Mechanics, tailors, dressmakers, hairdressers, cooks, busdrivers, printers, maintenance engineers, electrical engineers, T.V. and radio engineers.

6. Partly skilled and unskilled. Transport workers, fitters, postmen, ticket collectors, guards, telephonists, machinists, nursing auxilliaries, cleaners, packers, assemblers, waiters.

7. None. Students, unemployed.

proportion of intermediate occupations is explained by the preponderance of nurses in the population. In the skilled non-manual category the majority of women are clerks and typists. The 12% engaged in skilled manual occupations comprise a large number of canteen cooks and dressmakers. The women's occupations include ledturers, librarians and social workers, teachers and laboratory assistants, telephonists and packers, but the largest concentration occurs in nursing and secretarial work, with catering in third place.

No single occupational group is dominant in the men's case. The largest single group is probably the routine white-collar workers who hold jobs in the Civil Service and public corporations. The intermediate group which contains 30% of the whole, consists mainly of accountants and bank clerks, insurance salesmen and executive officers. It includes a number of secondary school teachers, librarians, journalists, architects and laboratory assistants. The top category contains, in addition to doctors, a number of lecturers and professional engineers, lawyers, solicitors, a professional economist, a bank manager, and the director of a Commonwealth Agency. The skilled manual occupations include a high proportion of mechanics and maintenance engineers. In the partly skilled and unskilled group there are postmen, ticket collectors, fitters and cleaners.

There is often a discrepancy between qualifications of the worker and the level of skill required for the job. Another discrepancy occurs between the occupation and the particular sphere of interest of the individual. The women are more likely to be using the qualifications they have acquired than the men. Nurses, secretaries, cooks and dressmakers are using their skills, though not perhaps to the full extent. Men in the skilled manual category - mechanics, maintenance engineers and so on - are also utilising hard earned qualifications, but again not making full use of them, unlike the men in the top category. At all levels below the highest there are people qualified for professions they cannot enter, for one reason or another. In many cases the work they do is in a

related field but requires a lower level of skill than they can offer. A qualified accountant may work as an accounts clerk, an engineer as a fitter for British Railways, a barrister or arts graduate as a clerical officer in the Civil Service, and so on.

Perhaps the greatest discrepancy between training and occupation exists in the fifth category - the partly skilled and unskilled occupations. At least five Ibos with qualifications in law (one with a higher degree) are working as postmen.

The relationship between level of education and level of occupation is not easily established. Problems arise in eliciting the state of education reached, for reasons given above. It is also difficult to define the level of education. Various criteria may be used to classify courses, such as length of course, whether it is full or part-time, confers a diploma, certificate or degree, is vocational or academic. Such criteria provide a basis for classification but hardly for ranking.

The status of occupations associated with courses may be used as a basis for ranking the latter; but this requires a knowledge of the status evaluation of occupations in the population, and an extensive knowledge of the educational requirements of different occupations. Even then, the correlation of the two variables (level of education and level of occupation) rests on the assumption that consistency, or lack of it, between the two levels is sociologically significant. Assuming that it is, an attempt is made to establish the relationship in the following table.

See next page (236) for Table 3.4.

of the activities described here emerge only when they are considered in conjunction with the people's financial commitments, their lifestyles, and the social significance they attach to occupation and level of income. A discussion of life styles and occupational ranking may be left for the time being. For the present discussion it is important to note that the positions available to most people are inadequate to meet their financial committments.

Ibos in London are, after the war, faced with demands from relations and friends in Nigeria for capital to restore lost businesses and goods to replace lost property and to meet the shortage of such consumer items as clothes. Demands come constantly from several quarters, unaware of the problems faced by sons and daughters abroad in meeting the rising cost of living. Accommodation and maintenance, tuition fees and foster-parents' wages, are some of the items which have to be found from humble salaries.

Two strategies have been adopted to bridge the gap between income from paid employment and the level of expenditure which is required after the war, both to meet demands for assistance from home and in conformity with new aspirations for social status. One is to start a private business. The other is to purchase a house.

The sudden emergence of the independent business enterprise after the war is a remarkable response to changing conditions. The Ibo flair for entrepreneurial activity is given expression in a wide variety of independent business ventures. They include management consultancy, tax, insurance and property consultancy, promotion and sales, exporting and importing, retailing, printing office cleaning and tailoring. There is at least one boutique, a theatrical agency, an accommodation agency and a pharmacy. According to an Ibo sociologist resident in London, there are Ibo greengrocers, traders in Nigerian foodstuffs jewellers, booksellers, even "Smugglers". There are also Ibo taxi drivers.[1]

1. O. Madu, 'Lofty goals are trimmed but Ibo exiles seek a new path to prestige.' The Times, 28.9.71. "Smugglers" is probably a reference to prosecutions for cannabis smuggling. Police investigations of at least three suspected cases occurred in the course of fieldwork.

In some cases individuals work alone. In others a group of friends form a company, each taking a share. A typical example of the private businessman is Ubi, who came to Britain in 1960 for a course in building technology. He qualified and began to work for the Greater London Council. Soon after the war he decided to go into business on his own. With the support of his Jewish solicitor and his bankmanager he got an understanding with two finance companies, who now advance him loans if he wishes to buy another property or furniture at an auction. Ubi now has several properties of his own and a thriving business as a builder and surveyor. He employs an Irish-Nigerian secretary, and two West Indian decorators. His office premises are a basement room in one of his houses. His clients include all races and nationalities. Partnerships or larger associations are less popular. An example of a successful arrangement is that of the Biafra Management Association group described above.

Financial cooperation of this sort, is according to informants, entirely new in the history of the Ibos in London. In part it is a response to difficulties encountered by individuals who try to raise capital through the conventional channels. Apparently creditworthy businessmen and women are refused credit facilities for reasons which are attributed to colour prejudice.[1] The venture into private enterprise is itself frequently a reaction to difficulty in finding employment. The difficulty stems from racial discrimination (real and imagined) and the nature of the desired profession. Barristers, for instance, have difficulty in finding a seat in chambers and then getting cases to plead. For a person with qualifications in management or business studies there is frequently no other way of utilising the skills acquired than by going into business alone. Entrepreneurical activity, furthermore, gives expression to the traditional Ibo aptitude for free enterprise, seen in the existence of trading

1. F. Bechofer, discussing 'The petit bourgeois in the class structure: the case of the shopkeepers', at the Conference of the British Sociological Association in 1973, points out that the samll businessman is universally regarded by banks as a poor risk, regardless of colour, and discouraged from embarking on a business career.

communities in various parts of West Africa. In Obi's view, "the world is an open market. People compete on equal terms, and Ibos try to get to the top." His attitude is typical.[1]

Private businesses are often found in conjunction with paid employment. It is easy to find the travel agent's clerk who organises charter flights to Nigeria, the builder who builds extensions for friends in his spare time, the engineer who mends cars, the clerk who gives legal advice, and the man who acts as a salesman in the evenings.[2] The women, too, are keen on earning some 'pin money', whether or not they are already in full-time employment. They work as agents for mail order firms, tuppaware and cosmetics firms, as well as selling wigs and west african fabrics, and icing wedding cakes.

The second strategy adopted to augment inadequate income is house purchase. Although the rewards of home ownership are as much social as economic, this may be discussed in the present context as a post-war economic activity worthy of note. It is regarded by the Ibos as a form of investment and is seen as an economic rather than a social necessity. It is a means of maximising resources by avoiding the weekly payment of rent on rented accommodation, and by letting surplus rooms to tenants.

The movement towards home-ownership is a recent development, concentrated in the latter half of the war, and after it. Over 80% of couples in the marriage sample who were known to be houseowners acquired their property after 1968, and 46% in the years after the war. Comparatively few, 17%, were houseowners before 1967.

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1. This attitude may explain the popularity of insurance as a career. The insurance salesman is the prototype of the independent businessman. Bechofer.
2. At a sales meeting organised by 'Bestlines' in a West End hotel in the Summer 1972 the proportion of Ibos was striking.

TABLE 3.5. Year of Purchase of First House in Britain. (Source: Marriage Sample).

	Pre-1960	1961-7	1968-9	1970-2	TOTAL
Sole occupants	-	4	12	21	37 (28%)
Lived with tenant[1]	-	9	31	37	77 (59%)
Multiple house-owner	2	8	5	2	17 (13%)
TOTAL	2 (1%)	21 (16%)	48 (37%)	60[2] (46%)	131 (100%)

Notes. 1. not part of household, eg. excluding sisters-in-law who eat with family.

2. Including 9 currently negotiating mortgages.

Statistics are not available for the distribution of houseowners and tenants for the community as a whole. No systematic random sampling procedures were used and it is likely that a disproportionate number of houseowners were encountered. (See the General Introduction for details of the mode of introduction to informants and the effect this had on the representativeness of the sample). Nonetheless, the figures produced above indicate clearly that the trend towards house purchase is of recent origin.

Before the war it was considered adequate to live with one's wife and child in a single furnished room. The period of residence in Britain was expected to be short, and there was no need to acquire property. There was, in any case, no money available for such a purchase, since most people were full-time students living on allowances received from home. A significant minority - 17% - who bought their first property at this time did so in many cases because they were self-supporting. (See the case of Chima, described in the General Introduction). The group includes men who came before the introduction of legislation in 1962 designed to control entry into Britain, and they worked for several years on arrival. They saw in the purchase of a house a means of financing their studies, and lived on the rents. Sometimes they saved enough to acquire a second house. The category also includes professional people - doctors and

diplomats - who wished to have their families with them. Some who were housed by their employers, the Nigerian government, nonetheless bought houses. They recognised the commercial value in providing accommodation for their fellow nationals, and for members of their own families who were expected to come to Britain in due course for study. An Ibo who was one-time ambassador to Germany, for instance, bought a house in East London in the mid-1950s where his junior brothers and a sister, together with more distantly related kin and affines, now live.

The rush to buy houses began in earnest, however, towards the end of the 1960s when the outcome of the war, and hence the future in Nigeria, seemed uncertain. For the first time, moreover, most people had the means to obtain mortgages, since they were in receipt of regular incomes through paid employment. Several obtained mortgages through their employers - insurance firms and banks. When Biafra collapsed many people resigned themselves to a five or ten year wait in Britain, while the situation clarified itself and the prospects for return improved. There were few couples in 1970 who did not begin to look for suitable houses to purchase, if they were not already owners of one and had some savings and a creditworthy job on which to obtain a mortgage.

A period of hard work precedes the purchase of a first house. An informant whose experience is fairly typical worked excessively hard for three months, doing overtime in the evenings and at weekends, while he and his wife, lived on her earnings as a nurse. At the end of this time he had accumulated enough to obtain a mortgage and was able to purchase a pre-war terraced house in South London. A strategy adopted by some people is to form a savings club for the purpose of accumulating enough for a deposit on a house. Seven friends from Eke parish in Udi Division founded a Thrift Society immediately after the war, with the object of helping one another, particularly to buy houses. Each member contributes £50 per month and takes his turn in drawing the total. When this happens he entertains the others to a meal and drinks.

The next step for many is to let an upstairs room to a tenant, whose rent will help to pay off the mortgage. Such returns are not declared for tax purposes, the tenant being defined as 'kin' if the need arises. In fact, the dividing line between tenant and an extra member of the household is a narrow one. In several cases the spare room is occupied by a relation, sometimes a sister of the wife who has come to study nursing and spends her off duty periods there. Affines and village people are frequently selected as tenants for houses which are otherwise occupied by the owner's family. In investment properties, where each room is let to individual tenants and the landlord is less often resident, townspeople and kin are more often avoided. The preference for strangers as tenants in this situation and the obligation to house kin and fellow townspeople are discussed in Chapter Four.

With the proceeds of the first house a second is sometimes acquired. Most of the multiple house owners purchased their first house before the war and their second less than four years after the first, some with startling rapidity. More than once an individual who could best be described as a property tycoon was encountered in the field, his financial success due largely to this process of 'gearing'. Others have invested capital acquired through private businesses, one as a building surveyor, another as a non-medical member of staff in a private abortion clinic, becoming landlords on a grand scale. There is at least one property company formed by a group of associates holding shares.

Men such as these who view housing primarily as a business are exceptions. The majority seek better accommodation for themselves and their families, recognising at the same time that, in the light of their prolonged stay in Britain, this is a wise move financially. In the state of rapidly rising house prices in the early 1970s it appears that house purchase is the best way of utilising limited resources and that the buyer cannot lose, even if he wished to sell, five years later, and return to Nigeria.

The almost universal interest in housebuying in the sample studied is manifested in the diversity of houseowners as a category. They include individuals of all ages, levels of education and occupation, and marital status. In this context it is perhaps illuminating to examine the social characteristics of the couples who do not own a house., but live in rented accommodation, frequently with Ibo landlords. Married tenants tend to be either young and recently wed, or older than average, with large families and inadequate incomes. The former either plan to acquire their own home as soon as their joint savings permit, or do not intend to stay in Britain long enough to justify such a move. In the case of the older couples, poor accommodation, a large family which has to be fostered out and the need to work to meet the cost of fostering, hence the inability to obtain qualifications, constitutes a vicious circle which it is difficult to break.[1] However, the category of older couples includes also a very different set of tenants, who in socio-economic terms belong to the house-owning group (at least 2 of them do, in fact, own houses which are occupied by tenants). They consist of professional men and their families holding service tenancies, such as the director of the African Continental Bank, and staff of the Nigerian High Commission and Biafra House. Almost half of the total couples are housed by the local authority; most of them middle aged with large families, but some newly married. Housing trusts also provide accommodation for a few. The rest have private landlords, two-thirds of them Ibo, the reminder consisting of Englishmen, East Europeans and West Africans.

TABLE 3.6. Year of marriage and type of Landlord of Married Couples in Rented Accommodation. (Source: Marriage Sample).

Year of Marriage	1966	1967-9	1970	TOTAL
	40	21	17	78
Landlord	**Ibo**	**Other**		**TOTAL**
	34	44 (7 service tenancies 18 Local Authority 4 Charitable Housing Trusts & Hostels 15 Private)		78

1. Such cases were not often encountered in the field. Detailed information was provided on this category by a charitable organisation which deals with a disproportionate number of families with problems.

The status implications of house ownership will be considered later. The point to be made here is that the business of buying houses and maintaining them occupies the attention of a considerable proportion of Ibos. The hard work required to accumulate capital, the time taken in viewing likely properties, in decorating and converting newly acquired houses, the business of letting rooms and flats to suitable tenants and dealing with problems subsequently, takes priority over activities which have no bearing on the immédiate problem of making ends meet. There are positive reasons, too, for avoiding involvement with townspeople who might be tenants or business partners or simply competitors, in the formal setting of a voluntary association. One reason is the desire to avoid their over-familiarity with one's financial affairs, which leads to gossip and denigration. Speculation about the source of a man's success, while it cannot materially affect his progress, undermines his standing among local people. More important, perhaps, regular participation in local affairs implies a recognition of the rights and obligations between clansmen and can create unwelcome ties. The obligation to house a fellow townsman who needs accommodation may be difficult to avoid if it is known that the landlord has accommodation available. Having a townsman as a tenant is a situation however, which many landlords seek to avoid, since contractual obligations can less easily be enforced. A townsman who fails to pay his rent can be prosecuted only at the expense of the landlord's reputation in local circles which, as we shall see, he wishes to preserve. Nonpayment of rent does not, in the eyes of the union, justify a breach of the norm that disputes between clansmen should be settled internally. The settlement of such disputes is dealt with in the following chapter. Suffice it to say here that the economic activities of the period call for privacy not publicity, a state best achieved by remaining detached from local affairs.

Conclusion. After the war two phenomena are observable: a decline in formal organisation and the promotion of individual economic interests. Whether the two are causally related is difficult to say. If objective evidence could be produced to show that political activists are the poorer members of the community who seek to manipulate ethnic ties to further their private interests, or that those who absent themselves from meetings are the landlords, and prosperous men, a causal relationship could be established. But there are, in fact, no distinguishing features between the active and inactive members, or the successful and unsuccessful unions.

It is more appropriate therefore to regard the two variables as concommitant variations, produced by a third factor: the changed political situation of the Ibos brought about by the collapse of Biafra. Thus the central political organisations were affected inevitably. Local units were affected too, to the extent that local unions have a political dimension. Hence the slow rate of revival in most of them. The lack of vitality in the town and clan unions after the war is accounted for by the political factor and reinforced by the economic factor.

During the war the unit of identification and action became coterminous with Ibo land and beyond it with Biafra. The idiom in which political interests were articulated was one of kinship and locality. Thus local units became political units in relation to their structural counterparts. In the pre-war period, too, local unions had had a political dimension in the sense of bargaining to improve the influence and prosperity of their home communities in relation to their neighbours, and in seeing the union officers as the lowest in a political heirarchy which extended to a national level.

After the war the strength of local unions has declined in the absence of structural opposition; of outsiders in relation to whom members of a local community are united. The effect of this absence is reinforced by the economic factor. Internal solidarity based on the need for economic support is reduced in the post war climate of self-interest which is best served through independent activities.

The true influence of the political factor is less often apparent to participants, who emphasise simply the tedium of meetings and constitutional procedure. In an interview a union president expressed the view that while at home meetings are part of the cultural pattern, in Britain they lose their meaning. "The educational system here turns them into something different, a means for the expression of learning. People come and quote law, make points of order (this is never done at home); raise questions on financial membership and other constitutional matters just to show that they understand them..." While for the activists the meetings provide an outlet for legal knowledge and skills newly acquired but unexcercised, their frequent interruptions on points of order, reprimands to the chairman, and constant reiteration of issues only serve to reduce the interest of the rest.

The subjective explanation of public apathy is only part of the answer. Added to the factor of location is that of time. The preoccupations with procedure which, according to the informant quoted here, distinguishes London meetings from their Nigerian counterparts, has changed in significance over the years. Before the war, when educational qualifications were the primary factor in social differentiation in the community, attendance and participation at meetings was more important. A meeting provided a means of demonstrating fluency and skill in articulating common interests. A positive relationship could be seen between success at this level and the attainment of political office in the civilian regime of pre-war Nigeria. Success in local elections, the starting point for a career in national politics, was greatly assisted by the claim for instance, that " I defended the interests of the Owerri people abroad."

After the war, economic and political circumstances are different and so too is the significance attached to procedure and constitutional skills. Office in local unions in London can no longer be seen as a basis for ascent in Nigeria by would-be politicians, since the system of military government precludes the existence of such roles. Meetings on the old pattern are irrelevant

in the context of the post-war political structure in Nigeria, and hence unworthy of the attention of students who in other circumstances had seen in them a means of influencing decision-makers at a higher level.

The educational attainment demonstrated in the protracted arguments and constitutional wrangles of pre-war meetings is less prized after the war. Success is no longer seen simply in terms of paper qualifications but in the ability to make money. The new status symbols - property, a well-paid job - bear little relationship to success in local politics. Meetings are irrelevant to the interests of most Ibos in London, who give priority to their economic pursuits and to rendering personal assistance to their families in Nigeria.

The changed relationship between the individual and the union, and the objective reasons for it, can be seen in falling attendance rates and the ineffectiveness of traditional sanctions to enforce attendance. Before the war, attendance was generally regarded as compulsory. Persistent absence was met with fines and delegations to the home of the recalcitrant member to discover the reason for his absence. In the last resort, union officials sent a report to his sponsors who, if they were dissatisfied with his behaviour, could withdraw their financial support. Economic sanctions were successfully applied before 1967 to prevent lazy or unsuccessful students from dropping out of courses and failing to attend meetings. A young Umuopara man, for instance, who had been sent by three relatives for a degree course in Cambridge, had consistently failed to attend clan meetings. A deputation was sent from London to visit him, and found out that he had not registered for the session. A report was sent to his sponsors who discontinued their support. The young man quickly conformed to their expectations and resumed his studies.

Attendance is still compulsory in the constitutions of most unions but now the union has difficulty in forcing an individual to justify his absence from meetings, or to give evidence of his progress in college. The war disrupted many programmes of study, and other factors such as sickness and difficult material circumstances interfere with plans and force individuals to innovate in ways

not foreseen by their families. When people are largely self-supporting the union's threats to report them to their families are meaningless. Similarly the sanction of ostracism, traditionally applied to the person who refusss to participate in local affairs, can be treated lightly. With the constant round of work and study, social contacts are in any case attenuated. Social calls are not always welcome if time is scarce. In the dense, heterogeneous and anonymous neighbourhoods occupied by many Ibos a man often does not see his neighbours for months on end, so that the act of asking townspeople not to call on a recalcitrant member loses its impact. The threatened withdrawal of help and support meets with the same responses. Although in some cases such help is needed, people are on the whole financially self sufficient and prefer to settle their problems privately since a request for help from townspeople is an admission of failure, and an invitation to examine one's private affairs - to people who are competitors in the struggle for survival.

Thus psychological, social, economic and political factors underlie the absence of large-scale involvement in formal union activities. The decline of activity reflects the popular belief, often expressed, that the town union is the Ibo man's strength in a time of crisis, and that attendance rates at other times are irrelevant. Local solidarity exists regardless of formal organisation. Local support can be mobilised rapidly for collective action in times of crisis, either domestic or political. The need for regularity and sustained effort during the war justified the existence of special committees and frequent meetings. After the war a few local communities perceive the problem of rehabilitation in their home towns as being a crisis on the same scale, calling for continuing collective action. But for most people the obligations towards the people at home and towards fellow townspeople in London can be met without recourse to meetings and formality.

There is little desire or need for general meetings, for welfare, for collective development projects and for purely social occasions which take up time and involve expense. In short, there has been a redefinition of interests. Individuals no longer see themselves as part of a collectivity whose interests must be collectively defended, but as working separately to build up depleted family resources. The distaste expressed for politics, and the declining interest in local activities, is founded on economic and political realities.

CHAPTER FOUR

Post-war Period, Part II : Kinship and community.

Introduction. The contemporary situation is characterised by an absence of formal political organisation, by economic incorporation and by physical dispersal. The invisibility of the Ibos in political, economic and physical terms prompts the thought that they are not, after all, an interacting unit but simply a social aggregate whose common origins and shared experiences do not confer an identity or create patterns of behaviour by which they are distinguished from other groups. This, however, is not the case. The Ibos are culturally differentiated from non-Ibos by their activities and relationships in several institutional spheres.

The most cursory examination reveals relationships of cooperation and conflict founded on welfare, recreational, economic and kinship activities. Economic ties are exposed in disputes involving landlords and tenants and in acts of material assistance such as help with mortgage repayments and college fees. Informal social activity is inspired by the concerns of family and community - births and deaths, marriages and departures from Britain. Married couples and young people contemplating marriage are compelled to meet certain requirements as part of the obligation of kinship. Interpersonal disputes, whether financial or marital, are settled by reference to the same principle. The pattern of visiting within neighbourhoods suggests that shared residence provides another basis for intimacy among Ibos.

The object of this chapter is to examine various kinds of interpersonal and intergroup activity not considered in the last. In the course of the chapter the impression gained of total disintegration is counteracted. It will be seen that the intensity of interaction and the diffuseness of relationships in the war years has indeed been replaced by ties of a looser and more specific kind but that people are mobilised on a scale commensurate with war-time gatherings

for certain activities. Such activities are predominantly concerned with the affairs of kinship and marriage; the most frequent and large-scale event which draws the various social categories into interaction is the wedding reception. Before examining the various configurations of interest in detail it is useful to consider the structure of relationships in general.

Ibo networks are loose-knit rather than close-knit.[1] A single individual interacts with a wide range of people who may or may not know each other. Often they are related only through him. The guests invited to a party may include the host's townsmen, colleagues, 'in-laws', tenants and neighbours, and various friends who until that time are strangers to each other. In the war, massive meetings facilitated interaction on a large scale, and most people's range of acquaintances was broadened dramatically. Yet it is still possible to meet for the first time a former classmate or colleague who has been in London for a number of years, his presence unknown hitherto.

The structure of relationships is a reflection of two situations:the home environment and the London environment. Both situations provide bases for association. A man may interact with one person because he is a townsman and has local activities in common, and with another man because he attended the same secondary school or grew upin the same town. It is said, for instance, that "the Port Harcourt boys are very close".[2] People who have lived in the capital, Enugu, reflect the same tendency. He may associate with a third person because he is an 'in-law', and a fourth because they live in the same house, street or neighbourhood. Other associations are based on the work-place or college. War-time activities are an underlying factor in several relationships. People got

1. E. Bott,(1957)p.58. The concept is developed in relation to urban family networks. In network formation,"some, not all, of the component individuals have social relstionships with each other." Networks vary in their connectedness. "I use 'close-knit' to describe a network in which there are many relationships among the component units; and 'loose-knit' to describe a network in which there are few such relationships." See also discussion by R. Frankenberg,(1966)p.244 et seq.

2. The former P.H. residents had a social club in London which became defunct at the outbreak of the war. See p.93

to know each other through cooperation in the many non-local organisations set up at the time for specific purposes. In many cases they have continued to interact informally on a basis of considerable intimacy.

The pattern of interaction has shanged over the years, reflecting demographic trends and changing economic circumstances. Long-established residents say that in the 1950s 'everyone knew everyone else'. The British Council provided the focal point for student activity. Single men and married men whose wives had stayed behind sought each other's company to a greater extent than is now the case. Home ties and family responsibilities restrict movement nowadays and the routine of work and study leaves little time for other activity.

The situation in the provinces differs slightly from that which obtains in London. The reasons are partly demographic. In Edinburgh, for instance, where there are fewer than twenty Ibos, the community is close-knit.[1] Internal cleavages based on hometown, residence and occupation are less in evidence than they are in London, where greater numbers create a tendency for association on a more selective basis.

The connectedness of an individual's network is related to the type of role-relationships he has with other people. The concepts of network and role are analytically distinct though substantively it is difficult to describe one without the other.[2] A close-knit network tends to be associated with diffuse relationships, while a loose-knit network is characterised more by specific role-relationships.[3] Role relationships in the Ibo community are on the whole neither highly specific nor very diffuse. An individual tends to play different roles with different people, though with some people he has multiple-role relationships.

1. Details of this group were obtained from the English wife of an Ibo there.
2. For Frankenberg the relationship is causal. On p. 290(1966) he suggests that specificity in role definitions results in a loose tecture of relationships.
3. T.Parsons. The pattern variable of specificity - diffuseness defines the scope of interest in the object. This meaning of 'diffuse' is equivalent to that of the anthropologist's 'multiplex', which is adopted elsewhere in the thesis in accordance with the general orientation of the study.

Highly diffuse or multiplex relationships seen to be the exception rather than the rule, though it is difficult to generalise. Role relationships may be seen on a continuum, ranging from highly specific to very diffuse. At one extreme are people who work together, live together, share their leisure and come from the same or contiguous clans in Iboland. A group of tailors fall into this category. They set up a business together during the war. They come from a particular part of Owerri Province. Some of them are involved in a landlord-tenant relationship. And they associate informally when work is over. At the other extreme are people whose role relationships are specific. Their economic, kinship, political and recreational roles are played with a wide range of people. Their work colleagues are English. Their friends are Ibo and non-Ibo Nigerians or others whose education and occupations are similar to their own. Political activities are shared with townspeople.[1] Kinship roles may overlap with political roles to a slight extent since, in the nature of Ibo social structure, agnatic kin are townsmen. But affinal kin do not necessarily fall into any of the other categories of relationships.

An example of this type is the university lecturer. His professional colleagues are English and his personal friends are generally fellow professionals and former colleagues, most of them Ibo but none from the same area in Iboland. His relations with townspeople are political or of a patron-client type.[2] (He was until recently President of his clan union and he is frequently called upon for advice and help by clansmen in need, and by others to whom he is recommended by clansmen who thereby derive status and satisfaction.)

1, Frankenberg includes kinship and ethnic roles in a single category. His other major types are economic, political, ritual and religious, recreational.

2. Strictly speaking, the political and patron-client types of role should be described as kinship roles since an Ibo defines his townsmen as remoter kin when viewing them in a broad context. The role of President is more like that of elder kinsman than politician. Help rendered to needy townspeople is demanded and given in the understanding that clansmen are kin who must help each other.

The majority of individuals lie somewhere between these two extremes. Most have some diffuse and some specific relationships. Most people are involved in multiple-role relationships with one or two individuals. But only two or three roles are combined at a time. In other words, an 'in-law' may also be a tenant, or a political associate. Close friends are sometimes townsmen (though more often this is a coincidence); so are landlords and tenants. Friends not infrequently do business together, and business associates become friends. A lodge-brother[1] may be a townsman and the godfather of one's child.

The degree of interaction within the community is heightened by several factors. Demographically, there is a shortage of suitable people with whom to play the various roles. In the economic and social environment of London, which in the Ibo's experience is difficult and hostile, the need for assistance and companionship intensifies relationships within the group. However reluctant people may be to engage in money matters with kinsmen or friends, they are often the only landlords, creditors or guarantors available. However little time a man has to give attention and help a fellow Ibo who asks for it, if he is in a position to help he has little choice but to obey the moral imperative of ethnic ties. Various strategies are adopted, however, to avoid this situation. One couple went ex-directory, 'to stop people from trying for this and that'. Another man, middle-aged and prosperous, said that of course he gave help to local boys when necessary. In fact, there had been a young man seeking his help only a short while ago. Then with a change of tone, he turned to his brothers who were present and wondered with obvious irritation how the young man had got hold of his address!)

There are people, however, who frequently do act in this capacity. The university lecturer mentioned earlier had, on the day he was interviewed, received two telephone calls from immigration officials, one concerned a man entering

1. The Grand United Order of Oddfellows, a quasi-masonic movement, popular especially among Ibos from Eastern Iboland around Bende, where there is a tradition of secret societies.

the country, for whom he had written a reference. The other concerned a local girl whose stay in Britain has to be annually extended. As her legal guardian the man is consulted every time this happens. He acts in this capacity for seven or eight people. Some of them, like the wife of the brother of a close friend of his, he scarcely knows. He receives several requests each week for job or college references.

If internal relationships are based on cooperation, they also contain an element of conflict. Economic relationships, in particular, bring to mind Frankenberg's comment that people who are drawn together by common interests frequently end up back to back. The relationship of landlord and tenant is not welcomed much by either side but over half of the people interviewed were in a position of accepting accommodation from or offering it to, a fellow Ibo. A lack of shared expectations is seen in the not infrequent occurrence of court cases over evictions and broken contracts, and of appeals to the Rent Tribunal.

Given the economic and political circumstances of the Ibos in London multiple role relationships are inevitable up to a point. Against this must be noted a marked disinclination for social intimacy on the eve of the war years. The Ibos, generally speaking, are physically dispersed and financially independent. In many cases they have neither the time nor the inclination to engage in relationships outside their immediate family circle.

Since January 1970 when Biafra collapsed they have retreated sharply from their war-time intimacy. As people noted for their reserve they are 'suffering from over-exposure', as one man put it. The normal circle of close acquaintances is small, and few additions are made to it. The loss of a close friend who leaves to take up a post abroad creates a vacuum which reflects the specialised nature of relationships and their lack of superfluous elements.

Various points raised in this brief description of the situation in the Ibo community after the war are elaborated in the following pages. The discussion concentrates upon specific aspects of interaction within the community. It examines the bases of interpersonal and intergroup relations, and establishes

the primacy of local or ethnic ties over those based on neighbourhood, socio-economic status and other criteria. The analysis is undertaken in two parts. The first deals with relationships between townspeople or co-ethnics.[1] The second considers other structuring principles in the community, as they are expressed in patterns of association. Finally conclusions are drawn concerning the nature of ethnic ties, the strength and significance of relationships between co-ethnics and the ideology of kinship which governs interaction.

Ethnic Ties. A starting point for discussion is found in a personal account of local involvement which conveys an impression of the nature of local ties and prompts questions about their changed significance.

> Before the war, says Mrs. O, she knew only one other person in London from her clan, Ngwa. At a dance held during the war she met many more and established friendly relations with several of them, who are free to call on her at any time. After the war Mrs. O no longer attends the Ngwa Students' Union, for her duties as a nurse and housewife occupy her time, However, she maintains a close relationship with the Ngwa people. She describes their unity in cultural terms. The Ngwa have a distinctive dialect, dress, food and styles of address. (Older people are referred to as 'brother' and 'sister' and objects are never passed to them with the left hand.) The Ngwa people regard themselves as being closer to each other than are most other clans, and as being frank with each other. When Mrs.O married a man from a neighbouring town but different clan in London in 1967, she held a party for Ngwa people so that they could get to know him. They now treat him like an 'in-law', and warn him jocularly not to harm their sister. Mrs. O rarely visits her clansmen and women, for she has not free time during the week, and on Sundays likes to relax at home with her husband. They are not, in any case, among her close personal friends. Some of them occasionally come to see her, however, and not infrequently she and her husband are called upon to intervene in their domestic disputes.

Mrs. O's account indicates privileges and responsibilities resting on putative kinship. It reveals a self-image of socio-cultural distinctiveness in

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1. To the extent that townspeople are linked by felt ties of kinship, contiguity and socio-cultural affinity the term 'co-ethnics' is appropriate to describe them. Each local community constitutes a subgroup within the larger ethnic group which is ultimately defined in terms of descent. See General Introduction, p.10 et seq.

relation to other groups. Patterns of visiting and sociability, assistance in dispute settlement and concern for the wellbeing of fellow members, emerge as characteristics of the local community. The evidence of other informants supports the view that between townspeople there exist mutual rights and obligations which are widely recognised. They extend to hospitality, housing, physical and financial security, commiseration in misfortune and celebration of success, and a general understanding and forbearance in situations where such tolerance could not be expected from outsiders. Thus the men of the group are expected to observe certain rules in relation to each other's women, and to support each other in relation to outsiders. Disputes and disagreements between townspeople are ideally settled internally. Jokes which by outsiders would be regarded as insulting and offensive should be received with good humour by a member of the group. An easy intimacy and sense of community is thought to pervade relationships between co-ethnics, born of mutual understanding based on common interests. Kinship provides the frame of reference for action and association and is expressed in styles of address and in rituals designed to emphasise the genealogical links between constituent units.

The case quoted above indicates, however, that the extent to which the rights and obligations of townspeople are perceived and upheld has changed over the years. Before the war, Mrs. O's membership of the local community meant little to her. During the crisis she established links with her townspeople and attended meetings regularly. Since the collapse of Biafra the intensity of interaction has been reduced. Mrs. O does not attend meetings and rarely visits, or is visited by her fellow Ngwas. However, she 'feels close' to them and is involved in the settlement of marital disputes and domestic quarrels. Whether the impression of the weakening of local ties is correct, and possible explanations for the situation if it is, may be discovered in a detailed examination of the norms and behaviour of townspeople in different spheres of interaction.

An easy intimacy, arising from common origins and interests, is said to exist between townspeople. No preliminaries are needed to become acquainted, since they already know each other's background and kin, and after only a few moments conversation have discovered mutual acquaintances. Informants suggest that real intimacy is not possible with outsiders, even if they are colleagues, and have other interests in common. Townspeople are regarded as relatives and are addressed as such. As relatives they have first claim on a man's time. Mutual understanding between townspeople promotes frankness and permits the amicable exchange of insults which would antagonise an outsider. The kind of joking which is permissible between clansmen but not between members of different ethnic sub-groups contains sexual references. Talking about the strength of his relationship with fellow Aros, an informant said that he could take liberties with clansmen, cracking jokes which other close friends would not understand. He could, he said, accuse a fellow Aro of impotence, and however casual an acquaintance he would take it as a jest. A non-Aro, however, would probably feel embarrassed, and begin to wonder whether his children were his own. However, close a friend might be, he cannot have the same amount of shared experience, aims and obligations as a fellow townsman. Uther informants go even further suggesting that even casual acquaintances in London tend to be restricted by choice to people from one's own area, again for the reason that they have more in common.

The unity is perceived in terms of behaviour, Uther people have different standards. An Unitsha woman, for instance, is 'flippant with her mouth' (she discusses matters in public which an Awka woman would regard as inappropriate, such as sexual matters.)

Against this view, however, a picture of actual behaviour emerges which indicates that townspeople are not so intimate. Most informants choose as their closest friends people from other towns. Best friends are townspeople only by coincidence. Personal information concerning failures and successes, plans for the future, and financial matters, is witheld from townspeople, for they are thought to be envious and feel threatened by one's success. This fact contra-

dicts the ideal of brotherliness and pride in each other's success which, it will be seen, is supposed to characterise relations between townspeople. By other criteria, such as the frequency of informal visiting and privileges such as access to the kitchen, non-townspeople are included among close friends.

Another ideal feature of clan relationships is hospitality. Hospitality is one of the primary obligations of kinship and hence of clan membership. A visiting clansman, it is claimed, does not wait to be invited to eat; he makes his way to the kitchen and helps himself. Such behaviour would be acceptable from an outsider only if he were a close friend. No formality is necessary on either side and is, indeed, greeted with surprise if it occurs. A hostwho insists on being notified in advance of an intended visit, or a guest who is reluctant to help himself, is sometimes accused of being 'too English', and in violation of traditional norms of hospitality.

However, observation suggests that in reality this is not always the case. Visiting without prior notification often meets with disapproval whether or not it involves townspeople, particularly when the host is involved in intensive study. For reasons of time and weather the rate of informal visiting is lower than in the previous period. One only visits townspeople if they live in the same area, or they have something else in common other than membership of the same ethnic sub-group. An informant states that he makes a point of visiting a townsman when he travels to a particular part of the city, for reasons of security. "It is good to let someone know you are in a neighbour hood," he explains, "in case anything happens, like a brush with the police."

The obligation to assist and offer shelter to a person in need of it is incumbent on a townsman. If, for instance, a stranger from Newi is seeking a Newi man in London, one automatically takes him to his destination or offers him accommodation oneself. Assistance of various kinds is expected from the local community if one of their number suffers a misfortune. Thus in November 1972 an appeal was made to individuals from a group of towns in Northern Iboland to contribute towards the cost of flying a man's body home at the request of

of his widow. The basis of the appeal was a tradition of mutual help based on kinship. Descent from a single ancestor links the towns on the road from Enugu to Nsukka, and produces communal efforts among the clan in London on occasions such as this. The group lacks a formal organisation and in this case the affair was handled by the individual most closely related to the bereaved family.

Thus widows and children are assisted or repatriated to Nigeria if they wish to go. Mentally sick students are sent home and physically sick people are hospitalised and supported in Britain until they regain their health. Collections may be made to retain the house of a townsman who is threatened with foreclosure, provided his case is worthy of support.

However, it is often the case that obligations are recognised reluctantly, and sometimes ignored altogether. Like the man who wondered how a needy townsman had obtained his address, and couple who went ex-directory so that people could not telephone them for help, those in a position to be of assistance may sometimes seek to avoid exposure. Others who at the present time lack the resources to contribute to collective acts of assistance, raise objections of a technical nature or quietly ignore the request. Thus an Udi informant approached in connection with the repatriation of his clansman's body argued that the cost would be exhorbitant, and outweigh the benefits to his family. Furthermore, he argued, people should be directing their attention towards the fate of the widow and her children rather than the disposal of her husband's body. It would be better to finance their journey home than send the body while the bereaved family remained in Britain living on Social Security, as they proposed to do. Having voiced his objections in a reasonable way which, he hoped, would distract his fellow clansmen from his failure to contribute, the informant quietly withdrew and left them to get on with repatriating the body if they so desired. He recognised that his non-participation would win disapproval, and that in similar circumstances he could expect no help from the group. But his financial position left him with little alternative.

After the war a restriction has taken place in the range of kin to whom Ibos in London feel obligated. This informant, like many others, can no longer afford to recognise obligations to clansmen who are related by a tradition of descent but to whom precise genealogical links cannot be traced. There are no sanctions save the withdrawal of support in time of need. But in the post-war economic situation, when everyone is fending for himself, a man is prepared to rely on his own efforts in a crisis and does not anticipate calling on clanspeople.

Reciprocity is the basis of collective involvement in individual misfortunes. Justified in terms of the obligation of kinship the involvement contains a contractual element. The individual who fails to participate in group activities is ignored when he needs help, and the expectation of future support lies behind attendance at weddings and christenings. A prosperous middle-aged man said that he accepted very few of the many invitations to such fundtions which he received. "Why should I waste my time going?" he asked. "I am not getting married and I have no more children to christen. For young couples attendance is a form of investment because they too will have large attendance and gifts and so on."

Contrary to the pragmatic view of this union president, commiseration in misfortune and celebration of success are commonly included among the moral obligations of townspeople. They are often expected as a right by those who have suffered a loss of a close relation or achieved a success. Similarly, the latter are generally thought to have an obligation to invite their fellows to join in a celebration and townspeople expect to be included in the celebration of a marriage and the birth of a child, and the departure of a successful student or worker for home. Again, however, there are no universally accepted definitions of the respective rights and obligations of townspeople in these affairs. Actual behaviour is determined by a variety of factors which include economic circumstances as well as the customary rights and responsibilities of townspeople.

An examination of a particular celebration, that of a marriage, illustrates the point that there are discrepancies in expectation.

In marriages contracted in London, senior people are expected to help in the negotiations. When such people are available the guardian of the girl will deal with no-one else, last of all the suitor. In the absence of kin, senior townsmen may be called upon to act in that capacity. At the wedding ceremony, too, such people have an important part to play. They act as 'supporters' or chief witnesses. The practical arrangements are left to younger, more active townspeople, often officials of the local union.

In London the local community plays a greater or lesser part, depending on the size of the group and the adherence to custom in other respects. Townspeople regard it as an obligation to help, if called upon to do so, since marriage, like birth and death, is a family affair. They are gaining a wife or in-laws which calls for celebration and communal effort. Hiring a hall, ordering the flowers, arranging the platform (with tables, the cake, cards, flowers, drinks and gifts, and chairs for the bridal party, chairman and supporters) and seats, fixing up the record player, and so on, are the tasks of the union under the direction of its officials. Women prepare food the evening before, and serve it while the men deal with the drinks. Close friends of the groom, if they are not townsmen, are not expected to help, though they frequently do undertake such tasks as the sending of the invitation cards, proposing toasts and so on.

Not everyone shares this view of the rights and responsibilities to townspeople. The couples who do not are those who marry untraditionally and privately but also those, a considerable number, who take no part in union affairs and are not, therefore, entitled to such benefits. Attitudes on this matter vary with the size and degree of integration ofthe local unit.

A similar variation occurs in the matter of invitations. There is some difference of opinion as to whether townspeople should automatically be invited. In the customary marriage ceremony and its London equivalent the problem does not arise. Specific invitations are not necessary since everyone connected to the couple in any way expects and is expected to come. In London, however, printed invitations are the norm. The difference of opinion as to whom they should be sent sometimes leads to ill-feeling. People who expect invitations sometimes do not receive them and are highly offended. The traditional view is summed up in the following comment: "You don't have to invite your townspeople but if you didn't who else would you invite? You couldn't forget your own people unless something was seriously wrong. But if you didn't invite townspeople the worst that would happen would be the offended individual coming to the house saying, You didn't invite me, where is my drink? Bring it now!" For the purpose of marriage townspeople have a common interest and a shared identity. They are expected to turn up in force to gatherings of this kind. An informant explaining his own participation in the wedding arrangements of a townsman put it this way: "It is important to have people behind you, to speak for you. If you stand alone, people become suspicious and you can't marry easily. Your wife wants to see that her husband has people, because her security depends on them too."

It is difficult to know exactly what proportion of couples have private and exclusive weddings. The procedure meets with almost universal disapproval. It is regarded as selfish, snobbish and un-Ibo, particularly if both parties are Ibo. When they are not it is likely that the Iboman concerned does not interact extensively with other Ibos, and his activities are neither known about nor, in consequence, an object of gossip.

Most people, in fact, regard the invitation of townspeople as automatic, and a mass invitation is extended through the union. Townspeople are specifically invited if they are related also in some otther way, as close kin or family friends, political colleagues and so on. The smaller the local community the more likely it is that everyone is invited as a matter of course.

Events such as births and marriages, deaths and returns to Nigeria, are held to matters of concern to the group since they represent gains and losses to its number. The achievement is collective rather than individual. This can be something of a liability for the successful man, as the following case shows. Dr. P is a successful lawyer and academic. His townspeople recommend his services freely to people outside the town who are in need of legal advice or other help, and they thereby acquire status. The political success of a townsman, too, reflects favourably on the rest of the group. Dr. P was disturbed late one night during the war by a group of townspeople, drunk and noisy, who had come to tell him that he had been chosen to represent them in the Divisional Assembly. They had in mind the prestige his possible election as President of the Assembly would bring to the local community.

Informants stress repeatedly the pride in each other's success which characterises relationships between townspeople. This rests partly on the practical advantages which accrue from being one of a community of financially successful men. Success of this kind brings claims of assistance from the needy, and the more people there are in a position to help, the lighter the burden upon them individually. Here again, however, the statement conflicts with reality. There is a marked reluctance to disclose certain kinds of information to townspeople, for fear of the resentment and gossip it might arouse. Details of examination successes and failures, of occupation and income, of business ventures and house purchases, are confided to close friends but not to clansmen. An effect of the war and increased interest in qualifications and material success has been the intensification of the competition between students abroad which has always existed, structured in terms of traditional values. Considerable reserve and even secrecy surrounds the topic of jobs, success in examinations and other manifestations of material progress. The reserve is especially marked between people from the same community in Iboland.

Competition on a personal level takes the form of gossip and open speculation about the cause of a man's success. In some cases there are deliberate attempts to ruin a competitor's chances of damage his reputation. A friend will not cooperate to promote one's success. An informant who needed money for an examination fee was refused it by a friend, who would no doubt have been happy to oblige if it had been required for other purposes, such as gambling. In the end the man borrowed the sum from a Yoruba friend. Similar evidence was supplied by an informant who had asked his relation to help him obtain an examination entry form. The latter, he claimed, had found excuses not to do so.

The competitor is identified in terms of traditional sectional interests. Thus the identification of a rival whose success in a college or job fifty miles away would appear to have no bearing on an individual's own chances can be understood in terms of institutionalised competition between equivalent segments of a segmentary society. It illustrates the relationship between individual efforts and collective achievement. It also indicates the unsuccessful transfer of values to material circumstances which do not favour them. The more successful people say those who engage in such vindictive behaviour have a 'village mentality', and that although they are in Britain physically, spiritually they have never left home. Others simply write them off as 'mental cases'.

Individual successes are acclaimed by townspeople as a collective achievement which enhances their status in relation to other local communities in London. The successful individual is 'one of our boys (or girls)' whose achievement reflects favourably on the whole community. Within the group, however, competition is structured on sectional lines. People are seen as representatives of rival families, and villages, and confidences are witheld. An informant who supplied details of marital status for his thirty townspeople in London said he knew the occupations of only a handful of them. Such matters are never discussed in public, and rarely in private.

The collective celebration of a successful return to Nigeria, in the form of a send-off party, is inspired less by the ideal of brotherly love and affection, and pride in an achievement which enhances the prestige of the group in relation to equivalent groups than the expectation of reciprocity. The expectation behind such an apparently generous gesture as a send-off party is that the individual will remember the gesture when he is in a position to be of use to those who made it, and return the kindness.

This fact emerged at two parties organised on behalf of men leaving Britain by their townspeople. The first was a large affair, designed to celebrate the departure of a highly qualified young man for a post with an international organisation. A hall was hired for the occasion to take the large number of guests who included not only all of the people from the young man's area, but people from all over Iboland, making a total of about 150. The occasion was formally organised with invitation cards and duplicated agenda, speeches and the formal presentation of a 'souvenir gift'. The programme was conducted by specially designated officials who included a chairman, master of ceremonies and general organiser ('savoire faire'). The speeches expressed pride and pleasure at the achievement of the guest of honour and assured him of his people's continuing support. Later in the evening when all the townspeople had arrived a photograph was taken of them surrounding the guest of honour, to commemorate the occasion for those who participated and, more important, to send to the people at home. It came as something of a surprise to learn, after the event, that the mutual goodwill evident at the time had hitherto been markedly absent from the relationship between the guest of honour and his townspeople. The young man's fiancee, herself not Ibo, remarked privately and with some bitterness that the union had in fact contributed nothing towards his achievement. He was a self-made man who had struggled to overcome considerable obstacles in the course of his rise from a very humble background. He had had to contend with opposition from his townspeople, formally expressed at meetings which he was summoned to attend,

to his relationship with his fiancee. On attainment of his new post, however, he became 'our son', whose achievement was hailed as a landmark for the local community. The elaborate party staged to send him off in a fitting style was intended to remind him of his continuing obligations to them and to create a favourable impression in the minds of the many outsiders who attended the occasion.

At the second party the principle of reciprocity which underlay the proceedings emerged even more clearly through a chance error on the part of a guest who was proposing a vote of thanks to the organisers. The party was held on a cold and wet evening in October, and the turn out was smaller than had been expected. Every man and woman from the area had been sent a formal invitation which read:

> Notice to Mr.-
>
> Send Off Party for Mr. J.C.-
>
> As you no doubt already know, our distinguished colleague and friend, Mr. J.C.- will shortly be returning home for good. It has been considered that a party in Mr. C's honour would be a modest way of acknowledging his selfless and devoted efforts in the service of our people in the U.K. This party, to be held on October 16th 1971 at the Crown and Woolpack (a public house in which an upstairs room had been hired for the occasion) beginning at 7 pm, is open to all our womenfolk and to our menfolk who duly pay the subscription, min. £1 per man, towards the cost.

There followed a list of names and addresses to which the subscription should be sent. The organising body was not specified and it transpired that there were several levels of organisation involved, a complexity due to the cultural characteristics of the area. It was this complexity which gave rise to misunderstanding and to the exposure of the latent function of the party.

The party got under way with food and dancing. Half way thorugh the evening the company was called to attention and the formalities began. The first speech was made by the colleague of the departing member, who came from a distant part of Iboland. He was followed by a man from Nsukka Division, a neighbour of Nkanu Division to which the guest of honour belonged. The next speech came from a Yoruba tenant of Mr. J.C., praising the personal qualities of his landlord.

A man from another neighbouring Division, Awgu, then presented a gift on behalf of Enugu Provincial Union, the larger body to which the constituent Divisional Unions belonged and of which Mr. J.C. had been president. This was followed by the presentation of a gift from Nkanu Divisional Union by the president's wife. During the war J.C. had represented Nkanu Divisional Union in the Divisional Assembly. The guest of honour was then called to reply to the speeches and thank his hosts for their gifts. Like his predecessors he made reference to the various political units whose interests he had helped to promote over the years. In the speeches as a whole it was not always clear which unit - District, Division or Province - was being referred to. The existence of so many unions was a source of cynical amusement to the audience. Whenever a unit was mentioned, they offered imaginary additions of their own (corresponding to smaller and smaller units). The potential subdivisions in the community were not, it seems, of any consequence on this occasion and merely provided a topic for jokes. The overall unity of the gathering was founded on the common designation of the component units as the 'Wa-Wa provinces'.[1]

The inuendos were lost on the few guests who were not from the old Enugu Province. However, it fell to one of them, an Owerri man, to offer a vote of thanks on behalf of the guests. He attributed the organisation of the party to Nkanu Union, and thanked its members accordingly. Immediately the President of Nkanu Union rose to correct him. He emphasised that the party was not only an Nkanu effort but had been planned by all the unions in Enugu Province, including Udi, Awgu and Nsukka as well as Nkanu, The reason for his prompt correction, the president said afterwards, had been to avoid bad feelings. In future, he explained, some reciprocation by the guest of honour might be expected. It would be said, "We gave you a send-off party, now you are in a position to remember us." In other words it was important to clarify the situation so that Mr. J.C. knew to whom he was obligated, and the right of the organisers to call upon him in the future was publicly acknowledged.

1. See p. 25 for an explanation of this term.

Thus the motive behind such communal acts of support is less altruistic than it at first appears. The gesture is made on the assumption of an eventual return.[1] The implication is that send-off parties may be viewed as a special type of gift giving. The social and political implications of gift exchange as these have been recognised in various societies[2] are present in the presentation of a souvenir to a departing Ibo by his local community.

It is, however, important not to overemphasise the pragmatic aspect of collective celebration. There is no doubt that, in relation to outsiders, members of a group see a strong connection between individual and communal success. The pride expressed in a member's achievement is genuine to the extent that by means of it the group excels in the eyes of its competitors.

The principle of rivalry characterises inter-group relations and dominates the conduct of intra-group affairs. Thus activities within the group are kept secret as far as possible, especially when they might possibly damage the group's reputation abroad, or give rivals an opportunity to compete favourably. This was the reason why Owerri women who had married outside the group were excluded from a meeting of Owerri women in 1971. They might go and tell their husbands the plans of the group, and their husbands' people might then organise rival activities and attract support away from the Owerri function .

All local meetings are held in private. No Ibos from another area may attend, and should someone inadvertently enter, all proceedings come to an immediate halt until he has gone. At worst he may be forcibly ejected. A man who visits a friend whose home is to used as a meeting place may be allowed to stay, according to one informant, because he is Ibo, but everyone concerned will make sure that it does not happen again.

1. The principle of reciprocity pervades Ibo social life. It is seen most clearly in the system of gift exchange described by an informant recently returned from a trip to Nigeria. People brought gifts which he could not refuse, and was obliged to reciprocate. The gifts, generally of food, had been given expressly though not explicitly in the expectation of a return of money or objects from England of greater value than the original gift.
2. See M.Mauss,(1954); C.E. LeClair and H.K. Schneider (1968) Chaps. 1, 17, 18.

Competition between groups based on community of origin was visible during the war when unions endeavoured to collect more money than their neighbours. Sometimes the pressure on individual members, with this end in view, was such that people resigned. A man from Aro Ndizorgu described the controversy which arose in the union over the extra amount to be levied, the time allowed to raise it, and who should collect it. The spirit of competition is apparent in the formal objectives of town unions. The constitution of Uraifite Union of Great Britain and Ireland stresses unity, solidarity and the achievement of distinction. The first clause forbids meddling in the internal affairs of individuals. The second calls for the avoidance of nepotism (village rivalry) in union activities. The third calls on members to "make Uraifite stand out among surrounding towns." They are exhorted to act as a team in the U.K., to speak with one voice, supporting progressive ideas from home. The fifth provision urges members to behave well, avoiding gossip, for if one man is disgraced the rest are put to shame. Finally, "by their conduct...Uraifite men and women must make their mark on the times in which they live..." by engaging in spontaneous welfare activities, arranging social functions and so on.

Group solidarity is reflected in and sustained by flattering self-images and derogatory stereotypes of neighbouring groups. Each local community claims certain virtues for its members. They are said to be witty, intelligent, shrewd, generous and so on. Rivals are mean, callous, materialistic, promiscuous, indiscrete and emotionally unstable. Often the distinction is perceived in terms of behaviour. Even without knowing where a person comes from, claimed an informant, one can tell by his behaviour whether or not he is a member of one's own group. An informant from Uhuhu describes his clan as distinguished by its dialect and standards of behaviour. An Uhuhu man will defend his senior if he has been insulted by an outsider or publicly denounce him if he has behaved inappropriately, thereby disgracing the Uhuhu clan in London. Uhuhu people do not steal, and neither do their marriages break down through misconduct.

Close identification and understanding exists between clansmen and women, which is why people endeavour to marry within the group. An Ohuhu wife understands her husband's behaviour and does not suspect him of infidelity in circumstances which an outsider might regard as suspicious (eg. being 'interviewed' by a young white woman).

The codes of behaviour within the group stress forbearance, hence solidarity. They are thus another aspect of the competitiveness which characterises inter-group relations, and appear in the self-image as 'mutual understanding'. Mutual understanding, or forbearance, is seen in the frankness of encounters between townsmen and women; in the exchange of insults which would cause offence to outsiders but must be received with good humour by clansmen; and in forbearance in situations of interpersonal conflict which might otherwise end up in open breach or, worst of all, in a court of law. These aspects are considered in turn.

Disapproval of a townsman's actions is expressed in the form of a joke, and must be received as such, in order to prevent an open breach in relations, and to preserve the solidarity of the group. Conversely, disapproval of an outsider may be directly expressed, since no relationship of cooperation exists to be broken. Conflicting definitions of the situation arising from different criteria of inclusion and exclusion are apparent when one of the parties takes offence at what was intended as a joke, or expresses amusement when an insult is given.

Thus the reaction to offensive remarks provides an index of group solidarity and the perception of interests. Reference may be made to two incidents which illustrate the differential perception of social distance and the strength of local boundaries. In the first, which concerned members of the same local community, disapproval was offered and accepted with good humour. In the other an insult was given in a joking manner to an individual from a different area, who took offence and terminated the relationship.

A group of friends from Old Onitsha Province were gathered for the evening in the home of one of them. A young Onitsha man walked in, accompanied by his Owerri friend. The Onitsha man asked for food, so the host turned to the Owerri man to enquire whether he too would like some rice. A member of the company said, in jest, 'Has he any choice?' implying that the Owerri man could not afford anything better at home (rice is considered inferior to some foods), or that he only ate rice, or that he could not afford to provide rice for his own visitors, and hence was not in a position to refuse the offer. (An exact interpretation could not be obtained, but the intention to insult with one or more of these meanings was inferred by the informant who supplied the case.) The Owerri man took offence and left the house.

Such a joke is permissible only between members of the same group. While the Onitsha man regarded their proximity as Ibos in an alien environment as outweighing the difference based on subdivisions within the Ibo community, the Owerri man did not. His action implied that the social distance between the two men, based on area of origin, did not permit remarks of this kind or obligate him to receive them in good humour. Alone in a group of Onitsha people he was not prepared to recognise that they had common interests which overrode sectional differences.

Between townsmen, however, offence is not taken. At an informal gathering of Onitsha townspeople recently a man brought along his wife, a woman from a neighbouring town East of the Niger, whose people are commonly regarded as inferior and referred to as 'Igbo' ('slave or bush person')[1] by the Onitshas. As he preceded her into the room, someone called out in jest, 'where is your Igbo wife?' This remark was greeted sheepishly by the husband, and with general amusement by the rest.

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1. V. Uchendu (1965) p.3; M.M. Green (1964) p.6: C.K. Meek (1937) p.9; Forde and Jones (1950) p.11.

Codes of behaviour stressing forbearance exist between members in relation to the women of the group. It is said (by men) that the young and unattached women are free from unwanted approaches in local gatherings (the young women's own experiences and perceptions are dealt with in the final chapter.) There they are treated with the respect due to sisters and clanswomen, and are unmolested. The rule of restraint applies equally to married or otherwise attached women. The principle of non-interference with each other's wives and girlfriends is best illustrated by an incident which arose out of its violation. This example, like the 'joke' which caused offence, indicates divergence of opinion as to the rights and obligations of townspeople.

Pius had been ringing up the various members of his local community of Udete (fictitious) about the misdemeanours of his friend and townsman, Damian. Damian had 'stolen his woman', a poor repayment for the kindness Pius had shown him on his arrival in London recently. He had driven Damian around to meet people, and even given him a woman of his own (a friend of his girlfriend who was also a student nurse from southern Africa.) Now Damian had taken his girlfriend from him. It was a most un-Udete like thing to do; "We don't take each other's women." Pius appealed therefore to the four other Udete men in London to stand up for him and talk to Damian. He appealed to one of them as a future in-law of Damian (who was engaged to his sister), to another in his capacity as chairman of the Divisional Union, and to two others as Udete people whom he could expect to take an interest in the case as a 'family' matter.

As other facts came to light, however, the arbitrators began to feel that Pius was being unreasonable. He had, in transpired, broken off his relationship with the girl three months previously, having decided that her home was too far away from his own and he should begin to think seriously of marrying an Ibo girl. Damian, moved by the girl's unhappiness, decided to take over Pius's role, though he took the precaution of warning Pius of his intention first. He also sought the view of a second Udete man at the same time to ensure that his action would not be violating a code of behaviour observed in the Udete

community. As Pius's efforts to win the attention of Ibo girls failed he began to think of resuming his affair with his former girl friend and was enraged to find that she had transferred her affections to his friend Damian.

Damian, for his part, maintained that he had not been'un-Udete-like' for at home it was the done thing now to start affairs with the girlfriends of one's friends. He had in any case warned Pius of his intention beforehand. He would not want to marry the girl anyway, for she was undomesticated. Besides, he already had an Ibo fiancee currently in her last year at school. Above all, Damian felt bitter that his name had been smeared in the Udete community in London.

The other Udete people agreed that Pius was being unreasonable. In any case, the two men should sort it out between themselves. It was not a matter for intervention by third parties, albeit townsmen.

There are several points of significance in the incident. Damian's bitterness over the damage to his reputation in local circles indicates the importance attached to the opinion of townspeople. Equally important is the assumption made by Pius that his friend had violated a group norm in having an affair with his girlfriend. The existence of such a norm is supported by Damian's action in warning Pius of his intention beforehand, and in eliciting the views of a third party before embarking on the affair. But it is significant that the people consulted viewed the matter as a private one which should be settled between the two men. Their definition of the situation conflicted with that of Pius, who felt that a dispute between two of them should be the concern of the rest. The different definitions reflect different ideas about group loyalty and the social significance of individual actions.

In general, however, efforts <u>are</u> made to settle local disputes. Just as clanspeople are not expected to take offence at certain insults, so forbearance is required in conflicts of a more serious nature. If an Uhuhu man in London for instance is abused by another, he should simply use foul language on him

in return and end the matter there. Counteraction leading to exposure to outsiders and an open breach is discouraged. But breaches do occur, in which case the members in conflict are subjected to pressure from the rest to come to terms and settle their differences. If, as happened recently, two men come to blows, they are severely reprimanded by the elders if and when it comes to their attention. An incident of this kind occurred at an Mbaise social gathering in 1969. The seriousness of the incident was compounded by the presence of outsiders. The skirmish between the Social Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the union resulted in their temporary suspension from office. Following a general meeting at which the two men were asked to account for their behaviour a committee was appointed to look into the matter. It produced a lengthy, legally worded document on the state of the union and the activities which had precipitated the clash. The fight was singled out for condemnation. As a breach between executive members in public it had undermined the reputation of Mbaise people. The report recommended the removal of the men from office, and a close watch on their behaviour in the future.

Despite the ideal of forbearance and peaceful solution of conflicts, then, actual behaviour contains disputes and breaches of solidarity. Ideally, townspeople are never seen in dispute by outsiders. They talk the matter over and soon discover a distant relationship or some other reason why they cannot afford to part company. Disputes, even financial ones, are settled without recourse to law. Court cases bring disgrace to the families at home and must be avoided for that reason. The favoured procedure for settlement is an orderly confrontation between the disputants and their supporters. If this fails to produce results, such as the payment of a debt, the wronged individual writes to his parents to ask them to negotiate for payment with his adversary's people. They either do so or write back telling him to wait until he is home to settle the matter, for "we know where he was born". i.e. We know where he can be found, and will get the money in the end.

This ideal is not always born out in behaviour. Disputes between townsmen of a serious nature do occur not infrequently and are often resolved by recourses to formal legal institutions: courts of law and the Rent Tribunal. Recourse to outsiders, moreover, is not entirely disapproved of, especially in disputes involving money.

The disputes encountered in the field fall mainly into two categories: domestic and marital; and financial. The former are the subject of discussion in the following chapter. Discussion here concentrates upon disputes of the second kind.

Financial Disputes. Financial disputes arise in contractual relationships, which are generally of two sorts: those concerning landlords and tenants; and those concerning business partners or parties to a commercial transaction. Before examining the cause and settlement of disputes it is worth considering the nature and frequency of the relationship in the context of which disputes occur.

There is no obligation to house other Ibos, or even townspeople, though occasionally the attempt is made by the latter to obtain accommodation as a right. A men persuaded an acquaintance from the same area in the north of Iboland to give him and his wife accommodation. The landlord did so reluctantly, since his policy was to avoid fellow Ibos as tenants. But since the flat was vacant and the applicant's family was friendly with his own in Nigeria he felt obliged to meet the request. The reluctance of landlords to ignore such requests arises less from the multiplex nature of relationships in London than from fear of the consequences at home. A landlord has little to gain, especially in material terms, from meeting the expectations of less prosperous townspeople. For him, however, the danger to family interests resulting from a breach in relations with the other man's family acts as a powerful sanction against pursuing his own economic interests exclusively.

Landlords are unwilling to enter into a contractual relationship with friends and townspeople. Only a minority of the 94 landlords in the sample had the latter as tenants. A man who had just acquired a house for himself and his family planned to let a room in it. He intended to take an Ibo tenant, but not an acquaintance, for the effect it would have on their friendship. Amicable relations could be preserved only if he made concessions such as a rent reduction. Other landlords refused to have Ibo tenants at all, since the latter tended to unreasonable demands and accuse the landlord of exploiting ethnic ties when they were not met. Fear of exploitation exists on the other side, too. Many tenants who were interviewed would not avail themselves of the opportunity to live in a townsman's house, or even that of an Ibo, if it were offered. Of the 35 couples and 30 single people housed by Ibos, less than half were with townspeople. An informant whose friend had just acquired some property was in desperate need of accommodation but both refused to enter into a landlord-tenant relationship. The informant, indeed, did not wish to have any Iboman as landlord. He had applied to the University of London Lodgings Bureau for a flat and was by chance given the name of an Ibo landlord. As soon as he heard the name, he said, he turned it down, without waiting for details.

Some tenants declare that they too would be reluctant to house townspeople or even casual acquaintances, if they were in a position to do so. "You only quarrel with those you know." The proximity of landlord and tenant would be likely to induce ill-feeling and conflict, resulting in the loss of a friendship. Generally, tenants, like landlords, feared exploitation and the inability to defend one's contractual rights as a tenant. It was feared that landlords would manipulate ethnic ties in their own favour. A young woman who had been searching for a flat for herself and her husband for months refused the offer of one in the house of a townsman for fear that he would take advantage of their existing relationship to avoid spending money on necessary repairs. The landlord, she knew from other tenants, would expect her to realise that "conditions are hard here" in

Britain, and that she should not therefore press him for such outlays. On her part the yound woman was unwilling to embark on a relationship which might jeopardise the relationship between their two families in Nigeria. The landlord's brother was a great friend of her father, a friendship which could not survive quarrels between their kin in London.

Not everyone, however, anticipated a conflict of this sort. Several cases were encountered of successful arrangements between townspeople, though invariably some concessions had been made to the closeness of the relationship, such as a reduction in rent. Contrary to the expectations expressed above, the diffuse tie between landlord and tenant as townspeople was expected to stabilise and strengthen the link. An informant from Achi was about to move into a house newly acquired by a man from a neighbouring town which enjoyed close ties with Achi and joint social activities in London. His wife came from Achi, and the informant looked upon his future landlord as an in-law. He anticipated a happy relationship with him, each man understanding the requirements of the other and acting with a degree of forbearance not normally expected in contractual relationships of this sort. In acknowledgement of their friendship (and no doubt in an effort to preserve it) the landlord had reduced the rent by a quarter.

The landlord-tenant relationship between Ibos has, like the practice of housepurchase itself, become more widespread in recent years. After the war townspeople are linked by other financial ties, equally contractual in nature. Business partnerships and commercial transactions involving cars and property in particular are, even more than landlord-tenant relationships, a post-war development. The movement towards private enterprise has already been explained as a response to contemporary economic and political circumstances. Compelled to remain in Britain by events in Nigeria, and faced with considerable problems in the job market, men and women have launched into business on their own account. While in most cases individuals work alone, there is some evidence of partnerships and larger associations concerning property, imports and exports, the

retail trade, and specific crafts such as tailoring. The issue was not, unfortunately, investigated systematically and it is difficult to be precise. It would seem, however, that individuals interact for business purposes on a sporadic basis rather than in the context of regular associations ratified by articles of partnership. Thus mention is frequently made of 'X doing business with Y' or 'A wants to do some business with me'. Several cases were encountered of individuals who undertook to make certain purchases for friends and acquaintances in London on trips to the Continent. Car purchase is facilitated in this way. Houses are sometimes acquired jointly. More of these business relationships were encountered between Ibos of different areas, linked by friendship, than between townspeople and kin. Although precise figures are not available to support the assertion it may be said that business relationships between co-ethnics (members of the same sub-group) are more prone to failure than those between more distantly related individuals.[1]

The causes of dispute between landlords and tenants, and between business associates, are various. Generally they concern the violation of rights or non-fulfillment of obligations, in the opinion of the wronged party. Disputes arise over rent which is deemed exhorbitant on the one hand and not paid on the other, over essential repairs left undone and promised improvements not made, or persistent and unreasonable demands for repairs and improvements; over failure to take a partner into consideration, or account for actions and expenditure; over failure to supply the goods when money has changed hands, or to pay for items purchased. Some cases may be cited to show the variety of circumstances in which disputes arise. The first concerns two business men who decided to combine their resources in order to make the best use of opportunities provided by the prolonged stay in Britain. They planned to import and retail West African foodstuffs for internal consumption in the community. The experiment failed through inadequate preparation.

1. The group of Owerri tailors, for instance, has broken up, some of the group continuing to work alone, others taking new occupations 'So that they can call themselves Doctors, and Lawyers". ie. it was the status of tailoring as a profession rather than the difficulties of partnership which caused the rupture.

Neither man had been involved in a relationship of this sort before, and they formed the business without working out the details of partnership. X was a very keen businessman; 'brilliant but careless' was how an observer described him. He did not bother to account for his expenditure. His partner, Y, an Ibo from another area, tended to assume authority because his family were handling the business at the Nigerian end, exporting the required foodstuffs to Britain. Not only did the couple fail to define their respective powers by Articles of Partnership but they brought in their wives to attend to the business while they remained in employment elsewhere. The women, in the opinion of the informant, were more concerned with 'watching each other' than getting the business going. One of the wives tended to arrive at the shop late in the morning, which antagonised the other. Quarrels between the two couples occurred with growing frequency. The eventual outcome was the dissolution of the partnership, reached by a series of interventions first by relatives then by an unrelated Ibo who became involved when he arrived to make a purchase and found the two men quarreling.

In some cases action and counteraction exaccerbates a difficult situation to the point where intervention of some sort is necessary. One such case concerned a dispute between a landlord and a tenant in South London in 1970, which was finally settled by litigation. One party came from Unitsha town, the other from a neighbouring community. The landlord had several complaints against his tenant, the most important of which was that he did not pay his rent. Another was his behaviour with the wife of a second tenant. The latter came from Unitsha, the landlord's own town, and having responsibility for 'our wife' the landlord rang around the townspeople to inform them of his errant tenant's ways. His most antagonistic response to the situation, however, was to remove the tenant's doors and windows. The tenant felt that he was being victimised and in retaliation attacked the landlord and his wife with a hammer. At this point the people who had been trying to reconcile the pair withdrew, and the matter went to court. The tenant was fined £40 and bound over to keep the peace.

In other cases the initiative is taken by the tenant. Landlords are not infrequently reported to the Rent Tribunal or subjected to visits by local authority officials such as the Public Health Inspector, at the request of the tenant. In retaliation the landlord himself takes legal action, obtaining an eviction order.

Another kind of dispute arised over the purchase of goods. In 1971 a Bende man bought a car into the country from Germany for another. Duty was not paid and the car was impounded by the police. The two men are in dispute as to who should pay the duty. A similar case, which will be quoted shortly in illustration of another point, concerns a car which, having been purchased in Germany, broke down on the return journey, and was repaired at a cost of £200 which neither the buyer nor the man who had made the purchase was prepared to pay.

The pattern of settlement varies widely as do ideas about the appropriateness of the different methods for handling disputes. Consistent with the need for secrecy and group solidarity it is frequently stated that the ideal solution of disputes between townsmen is internal. The matter is settled 'indoors' by the people most closely involved, and their supporters. If it goes 'outside' the reputation of the community is adversely affected, and the scandal gets home to Nigeria. In practice, however, the gravity of litigation does not deter the person whose financial interests are at stake, if all other methods have failed to bring redress. However, legal action is adopted with reluctance, and only after traditional methods have been tried.

Within the Aro community, it is said, a man is most likely to take a dispute to his relations, then to individual Aro friends. Each man complains to members of his own circle. By chance they may complain to the same person who may try to solve the quarrel by talking to each separately, or by suggesting that they meet and discuss it together. If gossip about the affair reaches the president of the union, who has an obligation to minimise misunderstandings between townspeople, he is likely to intervene by inviting them to bring the matter to the meeting. In a recent dispute between two members, relations deteriorated to a point where this happened. The issue arose over a constitutional matter and had

been exposed to friends and relations. When the two were no longer on speaking terms and even feared physical harm if they should visit each other's homes, the President intervened. He persuaded both men to attend the next formal union meeting, and each put his case. It was pointed out that they both knew where they came from and should forget that they were in Britain. In other words theyshould try to settle the matter amicably in the customary way. Peaceful settlement eithin the circle of townspeople is valued as being an Ibo way of doing things. Exposure to outsiders, particularly through court action, is regarded as being typically British, and undesirable.

Uther people recognise this distinction without necessarily disapproving of the unconventional mode. As one informant saw it, "here, Ibos behave like the English to an extent but because we are expecting to go back home we try to conform to tradition. Disputes are not settled traditionally, ("We wouldn't stand for it!" his wife interjected) but they are reported to townspeople and discussed. If a townsman failed to pay me rent I would report him to the union in order to avoid scandal at home. You need to preserve dignity at home, and an action like this would win respect. The union would have a high regard for me because I had reported the matter to them, thereby showing good intentions towards the community and a desire for peace. Anyway,"he added," the union might have been able to get the tenant to pay, since most of them are landlords and know the difficulties of landlords."

Sometimes traditional methods <u>are</u> adequate and court action is avoided. But the attitude adopted towards the disputant explains the quick reaction of the wife who 'wouldn't stand for it'. The object of the public hearing of the case is not only to prevent court action but to make the disputants live in peace. This requires concessions on both sides, and the acceptance of the verdict without argument. In a recent dispute between a landlord and a tenant from neighbouring towns the two men were sent outside while the meeting, consisting of delegations from both sides, decided the case. They were then invited in and

were not expected to argue about the decision reached. If, as happened in a dispute between a landlord and tenant from Onitsha town in 1971, one party (the landlord in this case) is dissatisfied with the verdict and plans to proceed with legal action, he is roundly condemned.

Before taking action disputants invariably attempt to settle the problem in the traditional way by appealing to their protagonist's people, since they are accountable for him and are thought to have some measure of control over him. A man with a house in East London was being troubled by his tenant, a man from a neighbouring town but different clan. The latter had referred him to the rent tribunal and called in the public health inspector to see the insanitory conditions in which he, the tenant, was being forced to live. The landlord felt that he had no case and wanted to be rid of the tenant but before taking legal action to evict him he informed his own people of his proposal and approached his tenant's people to complain of his behaviour. The latter's people agreed that the landlord had cause for complaint and warned the tenant to desist. If he continued in his activities, they said, they would not come to his assistance when the need arose. The tenant ignored them and was in due course evicted. In this case traditional sanctions were ineffective. The loss of his townspeople's moral and material support was outweighed by the economic injustice he was suffering at the hands of his landlord.

In cases involving finance, litigation is more likely to occur. However, when money has changed hands it is sometimes considered all the more vital to obtain a settlement without recourse to outsiders or litigation. The soncequence of failure is quarreling between the two families. The need to avoid this situation motivates intervention. In the dispute between two Bende men over the payment of duty on an imported car, one of the disputants approached a senior man from his village to intervene. The latter did so, he said, because "if the matter is not settled it will go home because money has been exchanged and the

two families will begin to quarrel." He felt personally involved and accountable for the settlement of the dispute because he came from the same village as one of the disputants and was hence his kinsman in London.

When recourse to outsiders is seen as the only means of gaining redress, impartial Ibos are sought first before going to the police. The individual approached for help may, like the man who intervened between the joint owners of the shop in which he purchased foodstuffs, become involved purely by chance. Several informants have been approached to help because they are acquainted with one of the parties and thought to be able to influence him or her. Others are sought because of their special qualifications. Ibo lawyers and solicitors are frequently called upon to handle cases and advise people on their legal rights. To make use of a fellow Ibo in this way, although it borders on legal action, is considered more favourably than exposing the matter to non-Ibos in the English courts.

The principle of solidarity and containment of disputes thus operates at all levels of organisation. Disputes between townspeople are if possible confined to the immediate circle of kin and friends. Disputes between individuals from different towns are ideally settled by the two parties without recourse to strangers. The protagonists expect their own kin and townspeople to support them in an orderly confrontation with the 'foreigner' and his people. The ideal procedure is illustrated in the following case. A landlord and tenant had quarreled and wished to avoid a court case. The landlord, came from Emekuku, a town in Uratta, while his tenant came from a neighbouring town, Ukpala, A delegation from Emekuku came to a relation of the tenant (the informant)'to talk in out'. The relation referred them to the oldest men in London from Ukpala, as the proper person to present the Ukpala case, and was invited by him to join the Ukpala party. The two groups met to review the situation. Having heard the evidence from the landlord and tenant they discussed the matter in camera and reached a decision which was accepted by the two men.

The expectation of solidarity and automatic support from townspeople is not, however, always met. A conflict of expectations is revealed in an other incident which occurred in the Udete community in 1973. This time it was Damian whose hopes of assistance and support were dashed. One evening he rang the other Udete people in London, with the exception of Pius with whom he was no longer on speaking terms. He wanted their advice and support in a quarrel with a Ghanaian. The group assembled and heard how Damian had given the man £400 with which to buy a car in Germany. The purchase was effected but on the return journey the engine failed. The Ghanaian rang to ask for a further £200, the anticipated cost of repair. Damian had no more money and was furious, insisting that the Ghanaian should pay the £200, or at least half of it. This he refused to do, and the two men reached deadlock. His townsmen heard the case and to Damian's surprise did not automatically agree with him. They argued that to hold the Ghanaian responsible for the engine failure on the autobahn was ridiculous. The responsibility was not his but Damian's and it was he should pay the extra expenditure incurred. It was suggested that he should raise a loan and pay the extra money required to obtain the car. The discussion lasted all evening and the men dispersed at 3 a.m.

Disappointed and resentful at their lack of support, Damian rang one of the men two days later to complain about their disloyalty. He was particularly offended by the reaction of the man who had suggested that he should raise a loan. His main complaint was that if the meeting had been a court of law the Ghanaian would have won the case, simply because one of the men on whom he, Damian, had hoped to rely, had 'turned against him'. He had expected his townspeople to back him against a foreigner who was 'trying to take his money', and took it personally when they did not.

As the others saw it, Damian's attitude was attributable to his fairly recent arrival in Britain. It was typical of people at home to regard justice as a relative concept. The outsider could have no case, and bystanders had a

moral obligation to take a stand with the man most closely related to them. The other Udete men, who had been in Britain for between eight and fifteen years, viewed the dispute in a different light. In their eyes the Ghanaian was justified in refusing to pay, and Damian was unjustified in expecting him to. Their social proximity to him did not make his cause any more acceptable.

In this case only one of the protagonists was Ibo. Even when both are Ibo the anticipated confrontation between two groups does not always occur. A housekeeper was moving and had found a successor among his townspeople whom he wished to introduce to his Ibo landlord. The prospective housekkeper brought his brother along to help negotiate the terms. When the introductions were over the brother began by making a formal speech. "I have come along as the person closest to X and accountable for what happens to him in this country. I hope we can have a serious discussion and arrive at a satisfactory agreement." He and his brother were somewhat taken aback when the landlord replied light-heartedly that he had not brought his own people along. When he had made arrangements with the former housekeeper he had dealt with him alone, and proposed to do the same with his successor. His remark was greeted sheepishly by the first speaker.

The individualistic attitude of the landlord contrasted sharply with the collective approach of the others. His attitude was not, however, more contractual then theirs. He still does not know his new tenant's surname, and no formal tenancy agreement esists between them. The arrangement is informal, based on trust and the knowledge that even if an Ibo man disappears without trace there are whose who can be held accountable for him.

The conclusions which emerge from this review of the cause and pattern of settlement of interpersonal disputes are interesting though the absence of a systematic approach may cast doubt on their validity.[1] It seems likely that

1. A more systematic approach would have been to examine all the disputes in a particular local community over a number of years. This was not seriously considered and would in any case have been extremely difficult to apply. It was felt that informants could only be invited to give details of the cases which they were acquainted with and about which they were prepared to talk. It is likely that many were not mentioned if only because they had been successfully contained. Generally, only those which were known to outsiders were divulged.

the incidence of litigation has risen in recent years, if only because house purchase has increased rapidly since the outbreak of the war. Business associations have arisen entirely as a result of it. Whether the rate of litigation has shown a disproportionate increase over other methods of settlement is difficult to say. It is commonly believed that cases which go to court today would have been settled by customary procedures before the war. But it is generally forgotten that the landlord-tenant relationship in its present form did not exist at that time. Comparatively few Ibos had property, and their tenants did not anticipate a lengthy stay, or experience economic hardship to the extent of later years. At the present time, when the acquisition of a house is seen as an economic necessity and an additional prize in the competition for social status, landlords and tenants are brought into a closer and more competitive, hence conflict-ridden, relationship. The tenant aspires to become a landlord, Cases initiated by tenants are frequently defined by other people as 'envy of progress'.

The preoccupation with private economic activities is accompanied by failing interest in the affairs of townspeople and in collective action in their defence. Hence the reluctance to become involved in disputes when called upon to do so, and the apparent lack of interest in affairs which were formerly thought to affect the interest of the group as a whole. In financial disputes particularly the imperative of kinship is no longer strong enough to keep a matter out of court.

An awareness of common interests persists in the reluctance to take legal action until other, traditional methods have been tried. Nonetheless, the recognition of conflicting economic interests, and action arising therefrom, suggests a growing awareness of class interests. It prompts questions about the relationship between ethnic and class ties, and the use of socio-economic categories in action and association. Before examining socio-economic and other possible configurations of interest a final aspect of ethnic ties remains to be considered. This is the ritual of the kola nut performed at gatherings of local people.

A Ritual of Kinship. The kola nut is a traditional symbol of unity and hospitality in Iboland, as in other societies of West Africa. Having accepted it the visitor is obliged to respect his host. To abuse him in any way is an abomination inviting ritual sanctions and signifying a breach in the relationship. Its sociological significance in traditional Ibo society lies in its associations with the segmentary lineage system. Relationships between segments are conceptualised and symbolised in the kola ritual. The relative rights and duties of segments are emphasised in the style of presentation, breaking and distribution of the nut.[1]

To some extent the contemporary use and significance of the kola in the London community resembles that of traditional Ibo society. However, avoidance of the custom and its misuse in traditional terms is equally significant for the light it throws on relationships within the community.

In London the kola nut is occasionally used in formal and spontaneous gatherings of local people as a sign of hospitality and a symbol of unity. It features on such occasions as clan meetings, christenings and private weddings, and spontaneous gatherings of friends. On all of these occasions the order of presentation and distribution serves to underline distinctions of status and degrees of social proximity. The following examples were encountered in the course of fieldwork.

A meeting of Umuokpara Clan Union on 1st August 1971 was held in the house of a member in Edmonton, North London. Discussion between the members was preceded by the kola ritual, which took place as usual according to the custom of Umuokpara (there are variations in procedure in different parts of Iboland) First of all the nut was blessed in the name of the ancestors. Then it was passed from the senior man of the host's section (village) to the oldest man of each of the six sections of the town in turn, in order of their proximity

1. V.C.Uchendu (1964) Vol.53. Also (1965a) p. 74-5.

to the section of the host. Proximity was defined in both genealogical and geographical terms, according to the tradition of descent from a single agnatic ancestor andthe physical contiguity of sibling segments. The nut was then broken by the youngest man (in some parts of Iboland this task falls to the oldest) and the pieces distributed by the oldest, again according to proximity and seniority.

The custom is observed also by the people from the neighbouring Ibeku clan. Those of the seven villages in Ibeku which are represented among the 18 members (only a dozen attend now, after the war) are 'brought into' the kola in order of proximity. If the ritual is started and not completed of if the kola is passed in the wrong order the individual from the section concerned feels slighted, and may protest. At home the individual who commits the offence of passing the kola in the wrong order is apparently fined. In London care is taken to avoid such disruption. The presentation is redone, and the kola begins its journey again. However, an Ibeku informant maintained that if the kola had started on its journey and he was ignored, and hence his section was bypassed, he would walk out.

The kola nut is sometimes used at social gatherings such as weddings and christenings, provided they are not too large and too heterogeneous. The larger the gathering the greater the risk of making a mistake, and offending someone. The host performs the ritual therefore only if he can identify the individuals present and knows of their structural relationships. Often a compromise is reached, and the nut is used only as a symbol of hospitality and good-will. In presenting and distributing it the only distinction made is that between the elders and the rest. The elders - Ndichie - are mentioned collectively and offered the nut first, and the remaining pieces are passed round the room. This was the procedure adopted at the christening party analysed in the General Introduction. However, evidence has been obtained of christenings where the kola was distributed more in accordance with tradition. At an Ibeku naming ceremony in 1969 the guests came mainly from Ibeku and surrounding clans - Umuokpara, Ulokoro and Uvoro. In this case the host (the father) passed the kola not to

the senior man from his own clan, Ibeku, but to a man from Umuokpara, who was a matrilateral kinsman. The reason, explained the informant, was that this man was a senior relative and represented his father in London. The 'uncle' received the nut and asked if there were any Ibeku people present. He passed it back to an Ibeku man, who in turn looked for the oldest man from Ulokoro, which is geographically (though not genealogically) close to Ibeku. It was finally returned to the host for distribution. In this case the genealogical principle was not so consistently applied.

The kola nut may laso be used at a spontaneous gathering of friends. In the following case the order of distribution bears little resemblance to the preceding cases, and other modifications have been made in response to the size and composition of the gathering. The group consisted of the host and two other men from a small community in Bende. The American wife of the youngest of them, a male friend of the host from Awka, and the anthropologist. An interview had been arranged with the host, who lived in East London, and his friend from Awka had come to join in. However, one of the host's townsmen had arrived unexpectedly that day from Nigeria en route for America, and the other remaining townsman had travelled from North London to see him at the host's house. The traveller had brought kola nuts with him from Nigeria, for use in the U.S.A., and it was decided to consume one there and then. The host, who was in the kitchen at the time, was the oldest and should have performed the ceremony. In his absence the next senior townsman blessed and broke the kola, pointing out that the task of breaking should have been performed by a younger man in accordance with the tradition of their area. The kola was blessed in the name of 'our grandfathers and elders', followed by 'the old men of this place' (eg. Chaucer) and finally references was made to the people gathered in the room. Pieces of the kola were distributed first to the host, as owner of the room and as an elder, next to his friend fr m Awka, as a stranger, thirdly to the host's townsman who had performed the ritual, to the third and youngest townsman, bound for America,

next to the anthropologist, and finally to the American wife. (The women were included to 'make them happy').

All the examples quoted here are concentrated in groups originating in and around Bende, in South Eastern Iboland. There is little evidence of the practice in other sections of the Ibo community. But neither is it universal among Ibos from the Bende area. There are community leaders who refuse to perform the ritual on the grounds that they do not sufficiently remember the genealogical relationships of the groups involved, and wish to avoid giving offence, by getting the order of presentation wrong. Others ssy in defence that they are no longer fluent in Igbo. Yet given the age and village background (as opposed to urban) of those concerned this seems hardly likely. It may be argued, therefore, that such individuals do not wish to remember. Their loss of memory reflects the feeling that differences based on descent within the community should not be emphasised because they are irrelevant. This type of forgetfulness, which anthropologists have called structural amnesia, together with inconsistencies in the accounts of the ritual and the difficulty of recall by informants who claim to practice it,[1] confirms the impression that ethnic ties have declined in significance. It is consistent with the post-war decline in formal organisation at the local level, and with the failure of interest in local issues.[2] The structural amnesia reflected here raises the possibility of other structuring principles in the London community which have replaced or are replacing ethnicity. One might expect, for instance, that individuals who avoid the custom are those whose economic interests encourage them to adopt socio-economic categories (which imply lateral ties) at the expense of ethnic or descent-based categories expressed in the kola

1. It is, for instance, impossible to present the distribution of the kola in London from the accounts of informants diagrammatically as Uchendu does (after Bohannan 1952) for the Nsirimo clan. The order of presentation of the kola in Nsirimo is consistent with lineage structure and spatial distribution. The accounts offered by London informants lack this ideal-type quality.
2. Unfortunately no comparative data was obtained on the use of the kola in different periods. It would be interesting to know whether the ceremony was more prevalent during the war, when local solidarity was more pronounced, than it is today.

ritual, while upholders of the custom are those whose lack of material success and youth gives them an interest in maintaining traditional forms of differentiation. This indeed seems to be the case but the evidence is too slender for firm conclusions to be drawn. The existence of alternative structuring principles is considered in the remainder of the chapter.

II Alternative Configurations. Possible alternative bases of interaction in the Ibo community include social class, current neighbourhood, and ascribed characteristics such as age and family background. To the extent that residential propinquity is a characteristic of common socio-economic status the neighbourhood variable may be considered in the context of social class. The main division, then, lies between achieved characteristics - education, occupation, wealth, neighbourhood - and those which are ascribed by birth - age and family background. Since the latter are less complex and far-reaching it is as well to dispose of them at the outset.

It is often said that 'London is a leveller' in reference to the fact that certain traditional status attributes are held to be of little consequence in the present social context. Patterns of differentiation based on age, family background and caste are reduced in significance. These factors may be considered in turn.

The decline in status based on seniority is commented upon most frequently by the older members of the community, and particularly by those who do not qualify for status according to socio-economic criteria. One such individual, a man in his forties who although fully qualified is engaged in poorly paid, low status employment as a mental nurse and lives in a small furnished room, expressed the determination never to stay in Britain, "because here everyone is equal. At home it's competitive. People belong to age groups and compete with their age mates." Older and younger men do not compete. Each have their own reference group consisting of peers. In Britain the informant is aware of being compared unfavourably with younger men. His greater age does not confer status, and he does not achieve it in any other way. The sharpest confrontation

occurs in the context of local meetings, where 'small boys' compete for office with 'elders', a situation peculiar to expatriate communities. At home the age groups in towns like Onitsha have separate meetings and do not share the same platform. Younger members defer to the older if all meet together. In London the age groups are brought into interaction in a single organisation which promotes the interest of the local community at home and abroad. The exposure to challenge from and censure by younger members is the reason why some economically and educationally unsuccessful men abstain from active involvement in local affairs. They withdraw on the grounds that dispute between an elder and a small boy is undignified and unorthodox. In one instance an elderly and hitherto active local politician made the arrival from Nigeria of his young daughter the occasion for his retirement from politics. The age gap would have been made more obvious he said, by the presence in London of a daughter who was the contemporary of the younger politicians.

Generally, however, retirement is made to appear as a generous gesture to the younger generation by which they too may acquire the experience of leadership and responsibility. The elders make themselves available for advice and consultation and may indeed be called upon simply by virtue of their age and greater experience and knowledge of customary matters and constitutional procedures.

While older men are subjected to criticism and disrespect in some circumstances, the traditional formality and mutual reserve is noticable in most situations. Intimacy between men of different age groups is the exception rather than the rule. Although such friendships - manifested in the exchange of confidences, and reciprocal visiting - were encountered between men in their early thirties and others in their mid-forties, most informants observe the customary restraint. Older men seek friendships among their peers, as do younger. An informant in his early forties gave this as a reason for his gradual assimilation into the non-Ibo community. His friends were leaving for home or jobs abroad, and only younger men were arriving from Nigeria. Obviously he could not make

friends with them, and so non-Ibo colleagues and neighbours were increasingly included in his circle of close acquaintances. The absence of intimacy is reflected in formal styles of address and in the view that a joking relationship is inappropriate. One can no more joke with an older or younger man, it is said, than one can with a member of a different local community. Where diffuse relationships exist between older and younger men who are not co-ethnics they tend to be of a patron-client type, in which the element of inequality is intrinsic. Familiarity is underwritten by respect and gratitude on the one hand and the recognition of need from a position of unchallenged superiority on the other.

Deference towards older men in the context of local activities, at large social gatherings and spontaneous meetings of friends is not a sufficient basis for the claim that age is a structuring principle in the Ibo community. The age groups tend to interact as such only in a local context. The age differential in the Ibo population is not, in any case, particularly large. Comparatively few are over forty or under twenty-five. The majority it will be recalled are in their early thirties. Added to the objective similarity is the subjective awareness that in the context of work and study, and the status which accrues from success in both spheres, age is immaterial. Only in the areas of kinship and marriage, and those events which are loosely defined as being family concerns - christenings, marriages and funerals, matters of life and death - is age accorded its traditional respect. This being so, the ties which binds co-ethnics of different ages override those between age mates in London. In general, age as a category does not inspire collective action based on common interests. (The role of the elders as a self-conscious group is considered again in the context of marital conduct and the settlement of domestic disputes.)

Differentiation on the basis of family background, again, has limited application in the present social context. It is recognised in the sphere of marriage, and as an attribute of social status by certain categories of people. The

family possession of a traditional title, a lengthy genealogy or a local reputation based on ancient achievements like success in battle, are seen as being important by some informants whose educational achievements are few. The status conferred by birth, and upbringing, according to such people, cannot be required or cancelled out by education. The distinction is well conveyed in the following description, reported verbatim:

> "Some people climb the ladder of social acceptability so that others who are <u>really</u> well bred have to play second fiddle to them. A chap comes to the U.K. and becomes a G.P., which gains for him acceptance in top circles but not complete intimacy. If such a man came to call on me I would invite him in and congratulate him for leaving the rabble. But if a man of my own background (i.e. father titled) had achieved that qualification I would <u>embrace</u> him, invite him to sit <u>beside</u> me and get my <u>wife</u> to serve him food... In this environment the G.P. from an unknown family has 'made it'. He feels at ease with high status people, and is often received with open arms. But inside me remains the question, who is he? I would not ask whether he had heard from his parents, or how they were (an opening gambit) because that would remind him of his inferior status. It would amount to a mischievous statement on my part."

The informant, to support his point, declared that he felt superior to a certain man in London who was the son of a national politician and successful also in his own right. The reason for the informant's superiority was that his village had customarily taken the attendant for its shrine from the village of the other man. The attitude of condescension towards self-made men is not often expressed in such forceful terms. The attitude that education does not cancel out background is expressed in contemptuous remarks directed towards young men who have made good marriages after rising from humble origins. "Who is he?" they ask, or "he has no kin", a literal translation from Igbo meaning "he is not known".

The emphasis on ascribed status by a minority is apparent in a variety of contexts, most notably in politics. Financial mismanagement of Biafra Union funds during the war is thus attributed by some to the fact that in Britain

"people who are nobodies in terms of family background can stand up and talk. During the war they got an audience and were entrusted with public money, the consequences of which were there for all to see after the war." The same attitude is expressed in spontaneous reactions to disrespectful behaviour such as "How dare he treat me like that: I have a home (ie. come from a well-known family.")

Nonetheless, it is recognised that ascribed status has little relevance to life in Britain. "London is a leveller" in the sense that nearly everyone is here as a student and background is insignificant in the competition for qualifications, if indeed background is known at all. Knowledge of a person's antecedents are restricted to those from the same area and does not count for much outside the local circle. The distance from home and shared circumstances of life in Britain has the effect of blurring social distinctions of birth and upbringing though, according to one informant, status-conscious people like himself endeavour to maintain social distance between themselves and others. One may have a professional relationship with a man but after work one does not associate with him unless he is a social equal in the traditional sense. Friendship and marriage according to this informant are based on this kind of status. With social inferiors one maintains a relationship of politeness and reserve. One does not visit or make social calls on a social inferior unless he is a townsman. One is not supposed to differentiate between people in this way but one does. Otherwise one risks being 'tainted'.

Often, as in this case, reference is being made implicitly to caste, the most pronounced form of inherited inequality. Mention has already been made of the caste system and its implications for interaction in the London community. However, the point has also been made that the evidence is too insubstantial for any firm conclusions to be drawn other than those concerning marital choice. It would seem in any case that the numbers are too small for caste affiliation to consistently provide a basis for group formation. Though in some contexts - friendship and marriage - caste is an important determinant of

social acdeptability, in the political sphere local interests override caste affiliation.

In general, objective evidence that patterns of association are governed by ascribed status in scanty. The strongest evidence that it is of little significance in group formation is provided by the subjective accounts of informants who are at a disadvantage in the new situation - the elderly and unsuccessful.

Social Stratification. Of greater importance are variables associated with achievement. The notion of social class, as it is used to describe the situation in western industrial societies, is not readily applicable to the Ibos in London. An egalitarian ideology obtains and few will admit the existence of any form of stratification except that of Usu and freeborn. But social stratification exists to the extent that there are groups with different status, between which social distance is preserved, and social interaction restricted in certain areas of social life. But there is no consensus on standards of evaluation. Different sets of criteria produce different status heirachies, though there are certain individuals who are regarded as high status by everyone.

The dimensions of social stratification among the Ibos are various. They include education, occupation and income, housing and style of life, and degree of personal influence over other Ibos. The two components of status differentiation - objective and subjective - are best considered separately. The first consists of objective differences in education, occupation, wealth and income, housing and life styles in the community. Under the subjective heading are included subjective categories employed by the Ibos to describe themselves and their neighbours, the status attributes in terms of which the categories are derived, patterns of interaction within and between status groups, ideology, and rights and obligations recognised in relation to social equals on the one hand and social inferiors and superiors on the other.

In objective terms, inequality in status in the London population is only marginal. The fact that an individual is studying abroad is a sign of his relative wealth and future elite status, if not of his family background.

The range of educational attainment analysed in the General Introduction is matched by the range of occupations and levels of responsibility. The correspondence is inexact in many cases where skills acquired in training are unemployed or employed at less than full capacity. The wealthiest occupational groups are thought to be accountants, lecturers and bank officers, followed closely by other professional groups - barristers and solicitors, doctors and engineers. In most cases income is deployed to increase wealth, particularly by means of house purchase. This narrows the gap between individuals with differential earning power. The clearest indication of objective differences, indeed, is seen in the housing situation. Again, the range is considerable, extending from families living in a single furnished room to multiple ownership. Within the categories of rented accommodation and home ownership there are again variations. There are tenants in furnished rooms with shared facilities, and others in self-contained flats. There are houseowners who live alone with their families (enjoying exclusive use of the various amenities), others who let a spare room, and others who own several properties.

These objective inequalities are reflected in the subjective categories employed to describe oneself and one's acquaintances. There are two main categories, defined in terms of intellectual and financial achievement: people who are 'doing well' and people who are 'struggling', or/unsuccessful. The individual who is doing well has qualified or is likely to do so, has a renumerative job or is making money through successful business ventures, and has property. The absence of some of all of these achievements earns the description 'struggling' a term which is modestly used among social equals to describe oneself when asked how one is getting on.

The existence of categories such as these does not, in itself, imply a system of social ranking or say much about Ibo attitudes towards objective inequalities and their implication for interaction. A system of social ranking does exist however and is related to the two categories described above. But it is not based solely on economic criteria.

The attributes of social status do not fit conventional definitions of social class. An informant trying to think of some of his acquaintances who might be prepared to give an interview said that he knew "all sorts of people" but it would be best if approaches were made to the "middle class ones". They were people "who have finished their courses of study and are waiting to go home, are landlords, and are happily married." Status is conferred by educational achievement, by possession of material wealth, and by personal influence manifested in requests for advice, and derived from visible success in managing one's own domestic affairs.

Academic qualifications are important both as a sign of achievement and a means to improved economic status and personal influence. That a doctorate is valued as a means and as an end in itself is shown in the tendency to use the title as a mark of respect whether or not it is technically appropriate. Often the acquisition of the title by the person on whom it is used is not even anticipated. The intrinsic value of learning, however, has been reduced by the advent of the war. Qualifications are sought more specifically as means to an end. None the less, the importance of education as a status attribute is undoubted. Since everyone has been reduced to the same level, the young and educated are seen as having the brightest prospects. In the choice of a spouse, women now give primary consideration to a potential husband's qualifications. A post-graduate student summed up the situation rather bitterly. "When a girl visits you the first thing she asks is, What are you reading? How far have you gone?" Parents, too, ask first of all what a young man is studying and whether he is making good progress. Provided he is not <u>Osu</u> his eligibility is greatly enhanced by a good education.

But the possession even of a doctorate does not gain respect if it is unaccompanied by other attributes. Learning is valued not in itself but as a mark of persistence and achievement, and as a means to the attainment of other, material and social ends. Similarly, wealth is an important attribute of status but insufficient in itself. Wealth is important for the use to which it is put, in training younger kin and acquiring dependents, property and other material possessions.

Renumerative work is a means of acquiring status and may be related to the possession of educational qualifications and the accumulation of wealth. An informant pointed out that one does not talk about jobs unless one is among equals. In company one does not introduce people by their qualifications since to do so is to draw invidious distinctions and to introduce an element of social distance. "The other man feels he does not belong, especially if he has been struggling for years to do his A levels." For this informant, clearly, education and occupation are the main determinants of social status. But occupational characteristics, given the employment situation of the Ibos, are an unreliable guide to an individual's achievements and capacity. Hence they are used unconsistently as criteria of status.

An essential component of status is the possession of personal influence, manifested in requests from others for advice and assistance in dispute settlement. It is for this reason that success in marriage is a status attribute. It shows a sense of responsibility and qualifies people to take part in other prestigious activities such as the settlement of disputes. Respect and public approval is given to people who have achieved the goals of education and renumerative work, who have condicted themselves with decorum but at the same time shown themselves willing to identify with the needs of the less fortunate. To qualify for high status an individual needs to be able to manipulate modern political, social and economic forces in return for gratitude and respect, which confer status. Those people with good jobs and qualifications, who have a sense

of responsibility and some experience of life, are sought out by the less fortunate for assistence in matters of a personal and interpersonal, emotional, social or economic nature.

The subjective awareness of a status differential based on the attainment of culturally defined goals has implications for social relationships. In discussing relationships a distinction must be made between ideology and behaviour.

Ibo ideology is egalitarian and meritocratic. It is egalitarian not in the sense that all enjoy equal status but that status inequalities are not institutionalised. There are no classes in the western sense. Individual life chances are unpredictable. The man or woman born in humble surroundings may achieve eminence, and individuals born with privileges may not neceesarily retain them. All are free to compete for the socially approved goals of education and material success, personal and political influence. But having achieved them, the successful must show concern for social inferiors, recognising certain obligations towards them. The help and concern they are expected to offer stem not, as in western class systems, from a sense of noblesse oblige, but from a genuine respect for potential equals and from the mutual recognition that the positions of relative power and influence may be reversed.

The ideological emphasis on equality of opportunity and regard precludes the existence of social classes in the sense of relatively closed status groups whose subjective awareness of common interests marks them off from each other in most spheres of interaction. At the conceptual level, social distance between the successful and unsuccessful, the 'haves' and 'have-nots', is unacceptable. Exclusiveness is criticised as elitist and based on an unreasonable assumption of innate superiority. The high status individual is not expected to discriminate in his choice of associates and friends. Neither must he forget his obligations towards the less successful. He must play his part in local affairs and assist the less fortunate, particularly when they are townspeople, in ways

which he alone, by virtue of his education and savoire faire, is able to do so. He must meet requests for advice, references and guarantees for immigration purposes, and render other help as the need arises. He should accept invitations to chair social events and participate in local celebrations. There are certain standards of behaviour expected of high status individuals at all times and especially in their dealings with social inferiors. They should be 'quiet' (modest, unassuming) not 'proud' (arrogant) or 'loud' (ostentatious). Respect and forbearance should characterise their dealings with lower status individuals.

The latter have a right to expect help of this kind. Deference towards high status individuals if it exists at all is based not on feelings of inferiority bur respect for their achievements. Deferential behaviour is expected only towards those individuals who have rendered assistance of some kind.

People who are known to discriminate deliberately in favour of their equals in educational and economic status are condemned as snobbish and un-Ibo. People who hold private wedding-receptions are excused as being either hard-up or wanting to discourage the type of person who goes only for the drinks. It is conceded that some may be deliberately selective but they are held to be very few because such behaviour meets with disapproval. "Even if you are self-educated (ie. under no obligation to other people) you have no right to cut yourself off like this. You don't own yourself. We attach status to education but if the well-educated then treat us as peasants they are not popular, and that is the important thing."

This perception of status is reflected in actual behaviour to a certain extent. Frequent participation in local affairs and the rendering of advice and help are observed among high status individuals. Like the university lecturer described in the introduction, most of the high ranking Ibos are receptive to requests for help. It is given not only to townspeople, though they are more likely to know of a man's influence and feel able to approach him.

A bank manager who receives requests for advice and help from all sides does his best, within the limits imposed by his job, to listen to everyone for "what matters to a man matters also to me". He attempts to reconcile the demands of his work and occupational role in an urban industrial setting with his traditional obligation as an elder to make himself available. This is not, for him at least, difficult. For most high status individuals the dilemma of individual versus collective interests, as these are defined in Ibo custom, is solved in a way which satisfies both supplicant and benefactor. The relationship between the parties is that of patron and client, both of whom benefit by the encounter. A successful man regards it as an honour to be approached by a 'small boy'. Although the bank manager's time is precious he gains prestige by giving some of it up in this way. But in fact would-be clients do not encroach on his time. People do not ring him at work unless they need advice or are in trouble. If he is unable to deal with the matter immediately he makes an appointment and the man visits him at home. If people drop in to discuss something with him and he is preoccupied they are prepared to wait or come back later. No man who rings to see him is ignored. He makes a point of seeing him when it is convenient. Hence he experiences no conflict of loyalties.

Not everyone, however,is able to reconcile the demands of work and personal interests with those of townspeople and others who expect attention. A college lecturer, for instance, expressed the conflict of interests as follows: "It is difficult to do what I want to do without appearing unnatural. In my office I may want to read a book for a lecture. Then someone rings to ask how I am, whether I have heard from home, and why I no longer attend parties." He is called upon without notice to chair social functions and is invited to many parties, as a senior and successful townsman and fellow Ibo whose presence will honour the company. The plea of pressure of work is not readily accepted, for his participation is seen by others as a matter of duty.

The dilemma of individual versus collective interests as these are traditionally defined (in terms of kinship and locality) indicates a discrepancy between the ideal and actual situation, between norms and behaviour.

In view of the divergence of interest experienced by the lecturer, and the incidence of conflict based on economic relationships described earlier, it is pertinent to ask whether social classes exist; whether the conflict of class and ethnic interests is resolved in favour of the former, whether the socio-economic elite forms a self-conscious, interacting unit whose members' links with social inferiors are only of the patron-client type.

Despite the ideological emphasis on equality of respect and on informality and intimacy between individuals of different social levels, actual patterns of association indicate social distance of a kind which is considered untraditional and socially unacceptable in most circles. Again, the issue must be considered at the normative level and at the level of interaction.

At the normative level it is held by a few people - mainly intellectuals - that high status individuals ought not to interact freely with the rest. The possession of certain attributes, especially the title of 'Dr.', requires that an individual conducts himself with decorum, does not mix freely at parties and dances, or crack jokes with social inferiors who would be likely to misunderstand them. The high status individual, according to this more elitist view, is entitled to choose his closest friends from among colleagues and social and intellectual equals. He need not reciprocate the visits of social inferiors beyond what is strictly necessary to preserve amicable relations with townsmen.

At the level of interaction, the use of socio-economic categories is evident in patterns of visiting, in the choice of friends and business associates, and in private parties.

Visits from less successful townsmen or others are welcomed but not reciprocated, for it is mutually understood that the senior man or woman is 'too busy', a phrase which seems to be a euphemism for having nothing in common.

The president of a clan union, himself a highly educated and highly paid professional, has this to say of his clanspeople: "People may drop in at any time, and I feel relaxed and 'free' with them as I would with my family. But because most of them are lower in status (occupation) and junior (in age) my close friends are not among them. A poorer, lower status clansman will recognise and maintain a certain distance between himself and me. For instance, if he visits and finds the house full of guests he will call in, say hello then leave, for he knows that he will not follow the jokes or feel at home with the people. I am visited by such people but I don't reciprocate. This does not cause resentment, for the others know I am a busy man. I can't afford to go around cracking jokes with people who don't understand. One can only be intimate in that way with professional colleagues and intellectual equals. If I went from house to house people would become overfamiliar and gossip would arise about me, So I keep myself aloof and let them visit me."

On a different occasion his friend and colleague expressed an almost identical view, and added that as a man who lived alone in a house with his family he did not visit people living in one room or even two. His way of life and ability to accumulate material things made the other man feel hostile. His close friends were men like himself who had property and education.

Even where it was maintained that lower status individuals could and did drop in unannounced especially at weekends, it transpired that they rarely did so unless they had a problem which they wished to discuss with the influential man in order to gain his help. There was little expectation either that the visit would be returned. Although, said an informant, his townspeople would have been delighted to entertain him they accepted that he was too busy to call. The same informant (a bankmanager) insisted that lower status individuals such as his Ibo employees could and did make informal visits. It transpired, however, that the last time they had done so was at Christmas when they had enjoyed his hospitality in the conventional manner, addressed him as oga (master) and asked for gifts.

Friendship networks, again, show some use of socio-economic categories, particularly in making new friends. A nurse who insisted that no social distance existed between the well-educated and the rest in the matter of friendship and social interaction in general admitted that she cannot in fact find much to talk to most Ibo women about and that most of her friends are highly educated like herself. They include an Efik teacher (the informant grew up in Calabar and speaks efik), a Ghanaian nurse married to an Iboman in the same neighbourhood, and her friend, a barrister, also Ghanaian. On the whole, however, closest friends are people met in Nigeria. Although the war brought together in the same meetings Ibos from different areas and occupations who otherwise would not have met, and it became normal to greet Ibo strangers in the street, few people met their closest friends in this way, or even here in Britain. Closest friends tend to be those with whom one went to school or grew up in an urban area, or worked with before coming to Britain.

People whom one sees frequently are generally those who live in the same neighbourhood in London. Neighbours develop friendly relations of an informal nature, mainfested in shared leisure activities and mutual assistance. Locality appears to be an important factor in association. A townsman is unlikely to become a close friend unless he lives in the same neighbourhood or has something else in common. A change of address brings all but the closest friendships to an end. The need to make arrangements for long distance visits introduces an element of formality, and there are practical problems of cost and time involved in keeping friendships alive. People therefore tend to be unfamiliar with events outside their own area. Ibos in the same neighbourhood develop ties of intimacy and mutual dependence, reflected in commensality and help in time of crisis. Support is given in celebrations and assistance in time of bereavement. During the war, Ibos in the Battersea area of South London developed a system of regular association focussed on the public library, where many studied during the evenings and read the newspapers for information about the war.

Although neighbourhood-based interaction is no longer as intensive or systematic, the neighbourhood factor is still significant in network formation.

The relationship between neighbourhood and socio-economic status is not clearly defined. It is said that Brixton is no longer socially acceptable for people with the means to buy property and they move to more desirable areas like Woodgreen. An informant living in another working class area of South London expressed the view that people of the same high status like himself like to live together and for that reason he wished he could move to Golders Green or Hampstead to be with his social equals. To the extent that certain residential areas like these are homogeneous in class terms a shared locality in London reinforces ties between Ibos of the same high social status.

The individuals who are most likely to adopt socio-economic categories in their choice of friends are the doctors, both medical and academic. Like P.C. Lloyd's national elite,[1] some intellectuals are most intimate with former colleagues and friends who live a hundred miles away. The remnant of the study group illustrates the intimacy which arises from similarity in educational and occupational characteristics. Another informal group recruited on an occupational basis are medical doctors. They interact socially and are disproportionally concentrated in middle class residential areas in North West London, such as Golders Green, parts of Cricklewood, Willesden and Finchley. Most of them, however, interact also with members of other less prestigious occupational groups.

Other occupational groups which came together in the form of professional associations in the war - accountants, insurance brokers, management specialists, engineers, caterers, lawyers - do not appear to associate exclusively with each other and the links forged during the war, where they remain at all, are specific. An exception is provided by the members of the old Biafra Management Association, of which mention has already been made.

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1. P.C. Lloyd (1966).

Thus occupation does not in itself provide a basis for friendship in the community. This may be because only a minority are actually engaged in occupations which make full use of their qualifications. Another factor is the nature of the occupational roles played by most Ibos, which tend to be of the independent variety, as opposed to basic or general roles.[1] The roles of bank clerk or caterer require a smaller commitment of life space than do the roles of priest, doctor or ambassador, for instance, and hence have less influence on the way in which leisure is spent and with whom it is shared.[2] The same argument can be used to explain the tendency of the intellectuals and medical men to associate more exclusively with each other than do members of other groups. A University lecturer whose work absorbs most of his time and interest explained that he could not have as a friend a man who came on Saturdays and wanted to go out visiting (a common leisure activity among Ibomen). His friends are fellow professionals, people whom he meets only occasionally and with whom he spends hours in conversation, exchanging views on matters of professional interest. His personal friends in London are few. His closest friend livesin Oxford, some fifty miles away.

People of different social levels appear at the same public functions - weddings, farewell parties, and so on - but do not mix freely. They tend to sit together and remain in each other's company for much of the time. This happens particularly at large formal gatherings such as dances. People who are well-known through distinctions avhieved in politics, or by level of education and occupation remain slightly apart, especially if they constitute a platform party. They dance together and do not approach other guests, nor are they approached by them unless intimacy already exists on the basis of kinship or professional interests. Even when there is no physical barrier such as a platform, the social distance is noticeable. In specifically local functions, however, such as christenings and weddings, it is less in evidence, although guests

1. M. Banton (1965) p. 33-41
2. S.A. Weinstock (1963)

tend initially to segregate themselves according to status. At a wedding reception in October 1971 where the guests ranged widely in terms of education, occupation and wealth, the seating arrangements reflected this spontaneous grouping. The four most senior men present, with the exception of the supporters who sat on the platform, sat together. They were senior in terms of socio-economic status, all in their late thirties, married with several children. They included a successful solicitor, a hospital doctor, a bank officer and an accountant. The wife of one of them was heard to say to a non-Ibo friend whom she had brought along, that the gathering was socially inferior. She had been to a 'much nicer' wedding recently which had been in a hotel and was by invitation only.

Generally it is only private parties, excluding those called to mark special occasions which are of interest to townspeople, that the gathering is homogeneous in terms of age, education and wealth. Social exclusiveness is frowned upon by those who are excluded, and sometimes by invitees, especially when they are called to celebrate events of a family nature.

The general attitude towards exclusiveness, particularly on family occasions, but even with regard to such activities as those of the study group is one of disapproval. It is consistent with the egalitarian ideology outlined above. However, even the intellectuals and other successful men who maintain that social distance can and should be preserved between themselves and the rest take care to observe Ibo convention as far as possible. While interacting exclusively for social and convivial purposes they play some part in local affairs, accept office in clan unions, meet requests for help in providing references, guarantees for immigration purposes and give advice in disputes. The development of lateral ties within the community is not in their view inconsistent with the traditionally valued relationship of dependence between townsmen.

The aim of this section has been to raise the possibility of alternatives to descent and locality as structuring principles in the community. Attention has been given to socio-economic factors in particular as the basis for a configuration of interests. The picture which emerges however is by no means clear. The extent to which common objective interests lead to subjective identification, action and exclusion varies from situation to situation.

Patterns of informal interaction, recreational activities, the organisation of private parties, the selection of intimate friends, indicate the use of socio-economic categories in action and identification. The common residence of certain professional groups also indicates an intensification of interaction within status groups. On the whole, however, neighbourhood is of little significance in expressing and sustaining relationships within the high status group. Dispersal does not affect interaction at this level since a shortage of time militates against casual social calls, and the almost universal possession of a telephone makes direct physical contact unnecessary.

A significant development has been the establishment of business associations among high status individuals, which might be taken as a recognition and exploitation of common economic interests. However, such associations as there are do not support this view. An exporting business, for instance, which involves a group of high ranking professional men, cannot be seen as exploitative of socially inferior members of the community. Nonetheless, it might be argued that while not directly exploiting the less well off Ibos in London it serves to reinforce the objective inequalities and increase the social distance between the two groups by promoting the interests of the elite.

In terms of economic interests in general there is no real evidence of clearly defined groups whose collective interests are seen to be in direct conflict. There is, for instance, no class of employers whose relationship to their employees may be defined in terms of structural conflict. A possible

basis for structural conflict of this sort is the relationship of landlord-tenant. But that,too, offers no clearcut divisions either in objective terms or on the level of collective action.

Owing to the large number of landlords and the absence of status crystallization (high ranking based on the possession of every attribute) it is difficult to see landlords as an autonomous group. There are house owners who have neither education nor local influence. The number of individuals who let a single room in their family house far outnumbers the multiple owners who might be described as landlords in the sense that they derive a substantial profit from the letting of rooms. Thus it is difficult to identify in objective terms a class of landlords with recognisable collective interests in relation to the rest of the population. Subjectively, also, such a community of interest is missing. The instance of collusion between landlords is rare. The informant quoted as saying that he thought his union might be useful in settling a dispute with his tenant since they were all landlords themselves would approach them not in order to obtain a favourable settlement but to save his reputation. In the union the decision is as likely to go against the landlord as the tenant, and redressive action on either part is much resented, whatever his case in law. Disputes and litigation occur between individual landlords and tenants. Where collective confrontation occurs there are likely to be landlords and tenants in both parties. It is possible that seen more consistently from the tenant's point of view a very different picture might emerge. Nonetheless it seems reasonable in the light of other evidence to assume that affiliation to other groups, recruited on the basis of kinship and locality, is stronger than that based on socio-economic status.

Involvement in local affairs sometimes occurs at the expense of private economic interests, and the prosperous man incurs a financial loss. He engages in activities which in terms of objective economic interests are irrational.

Acts of assistance to poorer townspeople are comprehensible only in terms of collective interest defined by descent and locality. The high ranking professional man who as president of his union repatriates a mentally sick student at his own expense is motivated by long term considerations in which temporary affiliations of a class nature play little part. So also is the wealthy president who finances the course of study of a London student whose funds have dried up. He cannot expect material returns, at least in the short term. The immediate rewards are an enhancement of prestige and an increase in personal influence over social inferiors. Such actions imply a recognition of rights and obligations in relation to clansmen which are absent from relations with status equals.

It is recognised that accountability for the wellbeing and activities of Ibos in London rests ultimately with townspeople. A high ranking individual is expected to assist a poorer clansman and will be called to account by the relations at home if he fails to do so. This obligation is recognised although the high status individual is unlikely to need material assistance himself and will turn to other sources - his bank or perhaps his lodge (there are about nine freemasons in the community and others who belong to a quasi-masonic movement) if he does. In matters of life and death the responsibility for assistance lies with clanspeople. It is to them that a person turns first in matters of birth and death or personal security, and they are the first to come forward at such times. Friends and colleagues are invited to celebrate a marriage but will not, unlike townspeople, be expected to help organise it.

Primary loyalties lie with kin and community. Faced with a choice between attending a union meeting or that of another special interest group an individual chooses the former. Thus a dedicated B.W.I. member reports that he invariably attends clan meetings. The problem of choice does not in fact arise, for the meetings are planned to avoid local engagements. But B.W.I. meetings have been altered three times on his account. Other individuals indicate the same

priorities in their choice of activity. Local celebrations have priority over others. The wedding of a clansman must be attended before that of a personal friend. A conflict of interests is resolved in this way even when the recognition of local obligations brings positive discomfort. A high status individual and his wife, both of them pressed for time and burdened with many commitments, travelled to South London to attend a christening in a household whose material conditions were deplorable. But attendance was obligatory. "A child is born innocent", said the wife in explanation of their attendance, "and cannot be blamed for his parents' misfortunes." The real reason for attendance is that status is defined not simply in economic terms. Participation in a local celebration of this nature is an ingredient of status and a means of retaining it in the long run.

Relationships with poorer townspeople must be sustained since they are the people whom the better-off expect to encounter in the future. Townspeople have common interests in a Nigerian framework and it is this which governs relationships in Britain. It is envisaged even by the elitists that lateral ties formed in London will be short lived. Indeed, ties of any kind save those based on kin and community are felt to have been attenuated by the collapse of Biafra. The routine of work and study, of collecting the children from the daily minder and sharing the evening meal, have reduced the opportunity and need for visiting and intensive interaction with other Ibos. Since the war, said a woman informant, "the women don't know each other". Work, distance, transport problems, weather and children prevent them from meeting and mixing as they did during the war.

While other groups form and disintegrate the local community is a permanent point of reference. Ties with townspeople are the only ones which persist, founded on a perceived identity of interests within a Nigerian framework.

Conclusion. While a distinction is made between those who are 'doing well' in financial and educational terms and 'those who are struggling', the economic variable provides only a limited basis for group formation. Place of origin provides such a basis more consistently and with ideological support. The main configuration of interests is ethnic, The most clearly defined grouping within the population is that of local communities.

People who share a common place of origin (the size of the unit depending on the context) constitute a moral community distinguishable from similar communities by the rights and obligations its members recognise towards one another. The codes of behaviour which regulate interaction and the intimacy which characterises relationships are justified by reference to kinship and common interests. An ideology of descent regulates relations within the group and between it and equivalent units. The significance of descent in binding the members of the community together is seen in the preoccupation with family matters. The dominant social activity on a scale commensurate with war-time gatherings is the celebration of family achievements. As many as 300 people attend wedding receptions, which occur with great frequency during the summer months, three or four each weekend on average. These events provide a forum for interaction between individuals of different social categories, and are indeed the only time they meet. Weddings and other local celebrations are particularly important for the women, whose movements are normally restricted by the concerns of home and children. The exhuberance and enthusiasm noticable on such occasions testifies to the strength of kinship ties. The wedding reception provides an opportunity for the reaffirmation of the traditional values of hospitality and collective achievement by individuals who in their day to day activities are exposed to economic and social pressures which isolate and disorientate.

Kinship provides the idiom in which the interests of the group and of subgroups within it are articulated. Appeals for assistance and solidarity

are made, and met, in the name of brotherhood. Friendships are preserved by reference to kinship. (An informant was unwilling to accept money from her friend in payment for a dress she had made. The contractual element in the exchange of money for services rendered was inconsistent with friendship. The dressmaker justified her refusal to accept payment by reference to a remote offinal link between them: her aunt had married a man from her friend's town, which made the two of them 'in-laws').

Appeals for material assistance and solidarity during the war were made in terms of kinship, and the ideology of descent was powerful enough to mobilise support on an effective scale. After the war it operates to preserve the unity of local groups in relation to outsiders, and the boundaries of the ethnic group as a whole in relation to non-Ibos.

Adherence to tradition in respect of dispute settlement is, however, only partial. The kinship imperative is not strong enough to override conflicts of interest as these are now defined. Cases do go to court. Other activities, similarly, suggest that the growing consciousness of ethnic ties during the period of crisis has declined. To the incidence of litigation is added falling attendance rates at local meetings, and the absence or weakness of central organisations, the reduced intensity of informal interaction, reluctance to meet traditional expectations of help and moral support in differences with outsiders, conflicting definitions of social boundaries as seen in the misinterpretation of jokes, and the structural amnesia manifested in the refusal or failure to perform the kola ritual.

A discrepancy between ideal and actual standards is seen in the conflicts of expectation and inconsistencies in behaviour. The cause of the discrepancy is the conflict between collective and individual interests as these are now defined. In the contemporary economic and political situation landlords and tenants promote their separate financial interests at the expense of ties of descent. During

the war solidarity was preserved by reference to kinship. At the present time ethnic solidarity is not so crucial. The practical need to overcome sectional and class differences in the common interest is absent. Hence the use of kinship symbols is neither as prevalent nor as effective in governing interaction.

Nonetheless, descent is the dominant structuring principle within the community. Kinship provides the idiom in which the group as a whole articulates its interests in relation to non-Ibos. The Ibos are culturally differentiated within the host society mainly by virtue of their concern with kinship and preoccupation with family matters. The value placed on kin and community is the means by which the identity of the group is maintained and the group itself perpetuated.

In this respect the Ibos resemble Jewish minorities whose distinctiveness is preserved by similar preoccupations. Jewish religious values emphasise kin and community and contain firm prescriptions for conduct in those areas. The most notable prescription, which directly controls the mode of recruitment to the group and ensures its continuity as such, concerns marriage. The adherence to marriage norms, particularly in the choice of a spouse, is firmly prescribed and enforced by a variety of mechanisms of social control. Whether the comparison of the Jews and Ibos can be systematically extended along these lines is a concern of the two remaining chapters, which deal with marriage norms and practice.

CHAPTER FIVE.

Post-War Period, Part III : Married Life.

Introduction. Attention so far has been focussed on secondary relationships, on the strength of ties in collectivities larger than the domestic group but smaller than the community as a whole. The discussion turns now to primary relationships within the domestic group. The object is to measure the degree of autonomy of married couples and their families, and the extent of involvement in their domestic life and marital affairs by kin, townspeople and other Ibos. The concern in this chapter is with life styles, the expectations and performance of conjugal roles, rights and obligations in respect of kin in Britain and families in Nigeria, and their effect on marital relationships, the conduct of marital affairs and the settlement of marital disputes.

The host society provides a negative rather than positive reference group in respect of marriage. Its standards are held up as inferior and unworthy of emulation by the Ibos. There are, however, superficial similarities in life styles and behaviour. On the surface, Ibo families are little different from young professional married couples in their way of life. The typical couple live in a small, terraced house in outer London. The front room, where visitors are received, is immaculate, with three-piece suite, fitted carpet, central heating, the coffee table and standard lamp, the mantel-piece decorated with ornaments, photographs and perhaps birthday cards. The television and children's toys occupy the back room which serves as the living room. There is a small circle of close friends. The couple are ambitious, hardworking, homecentred, secular and materialistic. The difference between them and their English counterparts lies in the absence of clubs and pubs. Instead, the Ibos are involved in town union meetings, mutual visiting and family celebrations.

The difference lies also in the ideological emphasis on family and community, particularly in respect of parents at home. While the recognition of kinship and communal ties in the London community is more a matter of personal choice, the family at home continues to provide the frame of reference for important decisions. The respect for parental authority is emphasised in the Ibo self-image. When asked how they are different from an English couple a young Ibo wife remarks that she and her husband respect their parents' views, especially with regard to marriage.

There seem to be few people who have no close kin - people to whom a relationship of descent or affinity can be traced and who are described as 'relations' - in London or at least in Britain. The coexistence of several members of the same extended family and even of siblings is generally unprecedented in the history of the community. The accumulation of close kin is a result of the war which created an influx of Ibos from the provinces and from other countries abroad, while it caused their kin already in London to postpone their return to Nigeria. While the informant who claims to have fifteen first cousins in the Greater London area is an exception, many people interviewed are linked to a number of others in a close knit network which embraces several local communities from a particular area. Larger groups of brothers and sisters, their cousins and affines, are encountered less frequently. Three cases were encountered of five siblings in London, one consisting of three brothers and two sisters, another of four brothers and a sister, the third of four sisters and a brother. The last is explained by the tendency of women to join their husbands, and is not therefore necessarily a war-time phenomenon. A case of several brothers living in Britain at the same time, however, calls for an explanation since in normal circumstances a senior brother would return home before sponsoring the next in line for studies in the U.K. It is in such cases that the war factor is of primary importance. The eldest brother D came to

Britain in the early 1950s to study Law. He acquired some property and with it financed the education of his brothers and sisters. His elder sister came in the late 1950s to marry, and her university education was paid for by her husband. A younger sister travelled to Britain in the early 1960s, qualified and returned to Nigeria with her husband, a doctor, whom she had met as an undergraduate. The next member of the family arrived in 1965 to study Law, and he was followed shortly afterwards by a sister who came to marry. Another brother came to study Economics in London and left during the war to continue his studies on the continent. The family has recently been joined by a younger brother who plans to study medicine. Thus three brothers, two sisters and their husbands, all but one of them fully qualified and engaged in full-time employment, continue to live in Britain. The fourth brother visits periodically from the Continent where his course is not yet completed.

In addition to their siblings and affinal kin, most of whom come from neighbouring communities, the Ds have other relations in London, including three first cousins from their home town. The circle of townspeople, about twenty-five in all, consists therefore of several overlapping kinship networks. Several of the women have married men from a neighbouring town which has also supplied wives for the men of their town. Other people, independently of the Ds, are linked by relations of descent or affinity. There are three sets of siblings and several first cousins.

Another family well-represented in Britain because of the war are the Us, most of them women whose husbands came independently but have remained after completing their studies. Mrs. U, a woman in her fifties, remarried in Biafra and left the country with her new husband, two small sons and a teenage daughter. She joined two adult daughters, one of whom is married, and their half-sister, who again is married to a family well-represented in Britain. They were visible as a group at the wedding of a half-brother, U, who married a girl from the same town in 1971. His wife has several close kin in Britain, including two first cousins who attended the wedding with their spouses and

other affinal kin. The occasion was indeed a family affair, to a greater extent than are most local celebrations, and was felt to be so by the participants.

At weddings and local dances such groups of related individuals are visible by an intensity of interaction which characterises their relationships at all times. Within the wider circle of townspeople, where similar but weaker prescriptions apply, they provide mutual aid and protection, assistance in contracting marriages and settling domestic quarrels, and mutual hospitality. In order to appriciate the strength of rights and obligations recognised in respect of close kin it is instructive to examine kinship terminology as it is used in the London community.

It is a well-known anthropological fact that the method of ordering relations within the recognised range of kin is reflected in the system of terms by which relatives of different kinds are spoken of or addressed. The use of a single term indicates an absence of distinction between the various categories in social life. It is therefore significant that the Ibos in London make no distinction either in terminology or in behaviour among close kin. The main subjective categories are two: 'relations', including all relations by descent or affinity; and the rest of the local community, described as brothers and sisters in accordance with the ideology of kinship which governs relationships in London. With classificatory kin the moral imperative of kinship is weaker than with real kin in the first category.

Although such terms as 'uncle' and 'cousin' are used when describing relationships for the benefit of non-Ibos, a confusion of generation and gender bears out the assertion of informants that such distinctions are not normally made and have no meaning in terms of customary behaviour due to individuals in these categories. Informants inreferring to close kin in London are uncertain of the appropriate English term. 'Uncle' is confused with 'aunt' and 'nephew', 'aunt' with 'niece', 'nephew' with 'niece' and so on. The words for cousin, uncle and aunt are not part of Ibo kinship terminology, for all in ego's generation are regarded as siblings, addressed as brother and sister, and equal obligations are recognised towards all unless resources are scarce

and discrimination is necessary. Thus an informant would, he said, not by-pass an 'immediate' relation (a full sibling) to send another to Britain to study. The degree of kinship in the settlement of disputes, again, is immaterial so long as the prospective mediator is nwanne - related by descent - or an affine.

The system of terms noted in the London community reflects both traditional Ibo terminology and the effect of an urban environment on traditional kinship relations. In the urban context precise degrees of kinship do not need to be acknowledged in terms of address since the rights and obligations attached to them in the rural environment lose their significance. In rural Iboland kinship terminology reflects the community of interest. In Ezinihitte, in Southern Iboland, the smallest unit is defined as Umunne - offspring of the same mother. The next is umunna, siblings with the same father; terms which reflect the system of inheritance and land use.[1] In other parts of Iboland, similarly, formal kinship categories are seen to have relevance for cognitive processes and social interests, and provide a logical system for the ordering of social relations. Henderson finds in Onitsha a terminological system based on filiation relations, the major dichotemies being between first degree and further degree kinsmen, between lineal and collateral kinsmen, and between agnatic and non-agnatic kinsmen.[2] Terms of address indicate the normative relationship of two individuals. Thus certain terms are used in address between agnatic kinsmen when "the speaker wishes to stress the actor's subjection to norms backed by unquestionable righteous power, a primarily prescriptive signification."[3] Others invoking matrilateral links are employed "where the speaker wishes to suggest orientations of indulgence and nurturance oriented dependence." On occasion individuals address each other as Nwanne, which includes a segment larger than the polygamous family, two generations of dead being included.

1. E W Ardener (1954)
2. R N Henderson (1967) p. 27.
3. op.cit. p. 49-50.

In London this most inclusive category, Nwanne, is the only one adopted to define relations by descent. All who fall within it are regarded as close kin and are treated with equal consideration in the recognition of rights and the fulfillment of obligations. Those who fall outside - the rest of the circle of townspeople, for instance - are 'brothers' and 'sisters' in the wider context of community relations and a moral imperative operates to ensure respect and consideration. The experience of Ibos in London resembles that of the ethnic minorities in Copperbelt towns. Epstein's observations on this point may be quoted in full and their relevance to the Ibo situation is clear:

> "Of course, even in the routine of ordinary life under tribal conditions the intercourse of kinsfolk often lacks formal precision. On the other hand, among the tribes, kinship frequently provides a basis for the formation of corporate groups, for common residence, claims to land, and do on; as such, it is articulated with the whole political and social system of the tribe. In the towns this condition does not obtain at all; here, moreover, it has to be remembered that the urban African population is made up predominantly of men and women of working age, ie. up to about forty, and that members of the senior generation are conspicuously absent. Thus kinship relationships under urban conditions are in a sense largely 'destructured', and kinship consists essentially in broad categories of persons who stand in different degrees of relationship of blood and affinity to one another, but who tend to treat one another as equals, and recognise a general obligation to help one another. This does not mean that the appropriate forms of behaviour as between, say, adjacent generations or affines are overlooked or minimised; what it means is that the further one proceeds beyond the range of immediate kin, the greater is the tendency to regard all kin, whatever their actual genealogical connection, as falling within the same broad category. It seems significant that in modern copperbelt parlance such persons are spoken of as being related mu cibululu... meaning brother. The deep value which attaches to kinship in the urban context lies in the fact that at its furthest extension kinship becomes synonymous with and gives expression to the fundamental values of brotherhood."[1]

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1. A L Epstein, (1969) p 101-2.

The parallel in the Ibo community is clear. All related by descent - Nwanne and affinal kin can be called upon for aid and assistance, and work together to achieve common goals such as the education of younger kin. Affective ties, material assistance and moral authority are seen in the hospitality given freely to visiting kin, and female relations on off-duty periods, in the incidence of informal visiting, the settlement of marital disputes and the arrangement of new marriages. Thus an informant who has several close relations in London spends nearly every Sunday with one of them. Others may not see their kin often "but it's good to know they're there." Affective ties do not necessarily require face to face contact to retain their strength and vitality.[1] They may be activated only in time of need.[2]

Nonetheless, there are areas of independence from kin, and behaviour does not always conform to the social ideals outlined here. Young female kin may be discouraged from visiting on the ground that they should by now have settled down and no longer be in need of support; in effect that they are imposing. The reasons, it will be seen, include sexual jealousy on the part of the spouse and the repercussions in the marriage of the presence of younger women. Equally, relations are not often visited if there is nothing in common socially or professionally. In the area of welfare and child care, too, independence is observed. Children are not fostered by kin or even other Ibos. Indeed, they are the last who would be entrusted with the children of a man whose success they might envy. Recourse is had to professional foster mothers through local advertisements and specialised welfare agencies. The Commonwealth Students' Childrens' Society, for instance, had at the time of fieldwork over 130 Ibo families on its files.[3] Help is obtained too from charitable organisations in housing, fostering and general welfare.

1. K Rosser and C C Harris (1965) p18-32, make this point in order to reconcile the notion of the extended family with the spatial segration produced by upward social mobility in Swansea families. They thus take issue with M Young and P Wilmott (1957) and others who define the extended family in terms of the frequency of face to face contact and spatial proximity.

2. Again, in the Swansea sample ties are activated in those areas of need which are not met by Social Security, public welfare organisations and the National Health Service.

3. (See p. 324)

An interesting development in the post-war period is the widespread interest in insurance policies. Life insurance rather than reliance on kin is seen as the best way of planning for unpleasant contingencies. An insurance salesman (non-Ibo) has no difficulty obtaining contacts and selling policies. His Ibo clients include young and middleaged men with family responsibilities. One client was persuaded by the reminder that if he died the next day his six children would not even have the fare home! The insurance salesman was ignorant of traditional mechanisms for coping with such crises, such as repatriation by the local community. But the success of his argument in this case suggests that such a solution is regarded as preferable by some individuals. The relationship with a salesman is specific and impersonal, and does not involve moral obligation and dependency as when claims for assistance are made on kin. The success of the salesman in question and of many Ibo salesmen of life insurance polities indicates the growing inadequacy of existing mechanisms for coping with personal crises. (Another facet of the insurance salesman's work is to give introductions to building societies for the arrangement of mortgages, an interesting reflection on the adequacy of other credit facilities organised on more particularistic lines.)

Ties with close kin do, however, seem to be important where the marital relationship is concerned. A young single man referred to the concern expressed by the husband of a distantly related matrilateral kinswoman in London at his proposed marriage to an English girl. Both he and the remote affinal kinsman accepted the latter's concern as natural and appropriate. In marital disputes, similarly, the couple turn first to the *nwanne of the opposite spouse, or any affinal kin, and they are the first to come forward to give assistance, no matter how remote they are in social or physical terms.

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3. (See footnote on previous page) This figure includes a number of applications for assistance in evacuating children from Biafra during the war, which did not entail fostering.

Within the general framework of domestic affairs and marital organisation the involvement of outsiders is most apparent in the maintenance of marital stability. Involvement of kin for the purpose of dispute settlement results from a variety of factors, such as discrepancies between role expectations and role performance, conflicting expectations of conjugal roles and definitions of the scope of the marriage alliance. The pattern of involvement of kin and others outside the nuclear family in marital organisation and dispute settlement is approached thorugh an analysis of conjugal roles. A case study sets the scene by drawing together some relevant factors. It indicates conflicting expectations of conjugal roles against the background of life in Britain, the typical response of a couple to a crisis in their relationship, and the role of kin in staving off marital breakdown. The case was reported by N.O., a kinsman of the wife who was called in and managed to settle the dispute.

N.O. received an urgent telephone call one evening in March 1971 from his kinswoman's husband, requesting him as the chief witness to their wedding some years earlier to some and solve a dispute which had arisen. N.O. was only a distant matrilateral kinsman of M, the wife, but he was chosen in preference to a closer relation who had disapproved of the marriage and refused to participate in the ceremony. As the chief witness and representative of M's kin N.O. had an obligation to see that the couple lived in peace and to answer for M's misdemeanours. N.O. in fact knew M well as she had been brought up in his father's house.

As N.O. arrived at the house M was out posting a letter. Her husband A locked the door in order to tell N.O. his side of the argument. M returned and demanded to be let in so that she could get the telephone numbers of her husband's people to bring them into the dispute and put her case against A before them. A at first refused to let her in, on the grounds that she had left the house

without his permission, this being the immediate cause of the quarrel. N.O. persuaded him to allow her back to discuss the matter. He persuaded M herself not to call in A's people, since he had no close kin, and to involve his townspeople would have been to expose the dispute outside the family. The couple should not, he advised, tell outsiders about their troubles, especially in London, "where people gossip and what you tell them one day is used against you the next." He then invited the couple separately to state their case.

A went through their courtship and his kindness to M. He said that she was stubborn, callous and abusive. When he came in at night he would like to find the place as he left it, neat and tidy. When he came home M did not treat him as a wife should. She expected him to help cook and wash up. When quarrels developed as a result, they would start to abuse each other's kin (since each came from different parts of Iboland). Finally on the night in question, M had gone out without his permission to see some single girls of whom A did not approve. Single girls in London were irresponsible, on the look-out for men, and hence a bad influence on M who should not associate with them.

M said that she was lonely and bored, looking after two small children during the day and never seeing anyone. On this occasion she wanted to go and visit her close friend and confidante, a single girl from Calabar.

Having heard each in turn N.O. gave judgement. He suggested that the couple had not fully accepted each other as husband and wife. They abused each other and their repsective families, speaking of 'your people' instead of 'our people', failing to recognise the identity of interests which should exist between husband and wife. A's antagonism was compounded by his tiredness and anxiety at having to start studying when he got home from the office. M sometimes behaved with the independence of a girlfriend rather than a wife. A wife should obey her husband in certain circumstances. It was reasonable that if someone had to stay in to look after the children she should first get his permission to go out and see her friends. As a solution N.O. suggested that they should

define their respective roles clearly. A for his part promised that if M gave him notice she could go out anywhere. M accepted that in future she should tell him in advance if she wanted to go out in the evenings.

The discussion was concluded with a meal. Eating together, a gesture of mutual goodwill, was especially important on an occasion such as this, as N.O. realised although he was already late for an important engagement planned for that evening. In the circumstances he could not stay to share the meal but took some of the meat with him, which satisfied the requirement of commensality.

This particular dispute was occasioned by a specific incident: M's habit of going out without permission. But in the course of it general grievances were exposed, arising from A's difficulty in combining work with study, and M's need for companionship and a change of environment after being confined to the house all day in the care of their small children. At the same time other issues which undermined the relationship, such as the disparity in background, came to light. The different areas of origin - A came from old Owerri while M's people belonged to Old Onitsha - were invoked in time of conflict and exaccerbated the grievances felt by each partner. The effect on marital stability of this type of incongruence is considered in detail in the following chapter. More pertinent to the present discussion are the circumstances which induced the quarrel, the conflicting definitions of the respective rights and responsibilities of married couples as expressed by the couple themselves and by those called upon to mediate, and the role of outsiders in maintaining marital harmony.

The remainder of the chapter is divided into four parts. The first deals with conjugal roles, at both the behavioural and normative levels. The distinction between role performance and role expectations gives rise to a variety of disputes which are analysed in the second part in terms of precipitating factors. Next the pattern of dispute settlement is presented to show that a combination of

traditional and modern methods meets with varying degrees of success, reflecting the altered structural circumstances of married couples and concommitant ideological changes. In the course of settlement, as in the quarrels themselves, frequent subjective reference is made to tradition, and the violation of customary standards of marital conduct. The use of tradition to explain and justify behaviour is taken up in the final part, which explores traditional expectations of marriage and dispute settlement and examines the extent to which they are adopted by actors in the present situation. In conclusion an explanation is offered for the involvement of outsiders in marital affairs in the name of tradition.

Jointness and Segragation in Conjugal Roles. Although much literature has been produced in recent years on the modern family there has been relatively little debate on the marital relationship[1] and practically none on ethnic minorities[2] in Britain. Invariably, however, an assumption is made that a relationship exists between the marital relationship and the presence or absence of structural support. Following Bott[3], several writers have chosen to concentrate on the density of social networks as the specific structural factor. Others have isolated such causal factors as background, type of neighbourhood, stage in the developmental cycle of the family, level of education, occupation, geographical mobility, and cosmopolitan or local orientation.[4] The relevance of these studies to marital organisation in the Ibo community is somewhat obscured by the background or ethnic factor. The complexity of the variables in the Ibo case makes an analysis in terms of casual factors doubly difficult, though it is necessary to make the attempt. For the time being, however, attention is confined to a description of the relationship as such. The initial task is to describe and analyse the marital relationship in the major spheres of domestic activity and outside interests.

1. S. Edgell (1972) gives a comprehensive bibliography of works in both categories.
2. Harrell-Bond (1969) mentions in a footnote that expectations and performance of conjugal roles are affected by background factors such as place of upbringing. Thus differences are discernible in marriages where one partner is Southern Irish or Yorkshire, as compared with those where both are from the Oxford Region where her study was conducted. S. Patterson (1963 b) develops

(cont'd p.329)

A useful approach to the analysis of conjugal roles has been provided, again, by Bott's pioneer study, which focussed on the extent to which married couples' activities are shared. Bott's dichotemy of joint and segregated roles has provided a starting point for several empirical studies and is useful in analysing the marital relationship in the Ibo community. Roles, following Bott, are said to be 'joint' when activities are "carried out by husband and wife together, or the same activity is carried out by either partner at different times." Segregated roles are those in which the activities of husband and wife are complementary or independent. They are either "different and separate but fitted together to form a whole", or "carried out separately by husband and wife without reference to each other, in so far as this is possible."[1] Since the publication of Bott's original study several major criticisms have been made of it, of which two are relevant here. In the first place, it is argued, Bott fails to distinguish clearly between norms and behaviour, tending to infer the former from the latter. Other studies [illegible] have indicated that the two are likely to be inconsistent, especially in situations of individual mobility or general social change. Platt notes that in such situations it is important to analyse role performance and role expectations spearately.[2] The same author is one of several who point out that jointness is not undimensional. There are varying degrees and forms of cooperation and independence in each of the major spheres or marital organisation. An individual couple may achieve different scores of jointness in the various spheres, so that their roles cannot be classified simply as joint or segregated.

The relevance of these qualifications to Bott's hypothesis for the Ibo case becomes clear when the causes of marital instability are analysed. The immediate

2. (Cont'd) a typology of West Indian immigrant marital relationships.
3. Bott (1957)
4. eg. Turner (1967) p 125. Harrell-Bond (1969)

1. Bott (1957) p 53
2. J. Platt (1969) p 295

task is to consider the marital relationship in the various spheres of organisation: household tasks, childrearing, leisure activities, financial matters, and general decision making. The emphasis at this stage is on role performance. A discussion of role expectations, or norms, follows shortly.

In the matter of household tasks, - cooking, shopping, cleaning, washing up, bed making - a couple is counted as having a joint relationship either if the husband participates regularly in domestic duties, or if certain domestic duties are interchaggeable between husband and wife.[1] By these criteria, varying degrees of jointness occur in Ibo marriages. Couples range from the fully joint relationship of the young wife who 'hates washing, ironing and making beds', has never done them in her life and whose husband does them all, and the young couple who used to wash clothes together in the bath before they acquired a washing machine; to the fully segregated relationship of the wife who performs all these tasks and 'has a terrible time because her husband won't help her in the home.' Most couples in the sample [illegible] showed some degree of jointness and flexibility. Husbands were found in the kitchen helping their wives. They shopped and washed up, and occasionally cooked if their wives were otherwise engaged. The tasks conventionally defined as masculine - interior decorating, repairs and so on - were generally carried out by men. More infrequent tasks associated with the household, such as flat-hunting, were normally the duty of the husband, though in one case a wife appeared to be making the strongest efforts in this field since she had better contacts than her husband who was newly arrived in Britain.

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1. C Turner (1967) p125, uses this and similar criteria to measure jointness in two other spheres, in his Leadgill study. "As far as having joint leisure activities outside the home are concerned, a couple was counted as having a joint relationship if they predominantly went out together, and as having a segregated relationship if they predominantly went out separately..... As far as child rearing is concerned, a joint relationship was defined as one in which father and mother 1. usually discussed methods of discipline and/or childrearing and 2. shared certain tasks of childrearing; a segregated relationship was defined as one inwhich they did not.

The same amount of flexibility is shown in tasks associated with children. Almost invariably very small children are entrusted to English foster mothers to enable their parents to study and work without distraction. A wife's income from employment outside the home is a necessity which prevents her from remaining there to care for them. Equally, the father's need to study in the evenings, sometimes in cramped accommodation, makes the children's removal necessary. However, more cases were encountered of children being 'daily-minded' than fostered full-time. Full-time fostering, sometimes in distant parts of the country, is embarked upon as an unpleasant necessity rather than a positive benefit either to the child or his parents. Only one couple interviwed took the view that fostering was beneficial to their children. Their son and daughter were fostered by choice (the parents were no longer students and had ample accommodation) because the couple much admired English child-rearing practices, in particular the attempt to draw the child out and inculate a spirit of enquiry.

The responsibility for taking a child to the daily minder in the morning and collecting him at night may fall to either parent. If the wife leave early for nursing duty the husband sometimes takes her to work in his car, drops the children at the 'nanny's' at the same time, and returns home to prepare himself for the office. The tasks of feeding, washing and changing nappies at home are similarly performed interchangeably by husband and wife, particularly when the baby is very young and the wife newly returned from hospital. On the whole, however, these tasks are carried out by the wife. Baby-minding is often left to the husband during the wife's hours of work, particularly when she is a night nurse. Several cases were encountered in which the wife had charge of the child during the day and her husband the responsibility of feeding, entertaining and putting him to bed when she had departed for work.

Fathers take a keen interest in the discipline and conduct of their older children. Strictness and in some cases extreme severity characterize their relationship, while the tie between mother and child tends by contrast to be more affectionate and less authoritarian. While mothers tend to indulge their

children, allowing them to stay up late, fathers demand high standards in school work and occasionally coach them at night and during the school holidays. (Harsh attitudes in fathers were reported by social workers, a child guidance officer, and a primary school teacher who had had to cope with the consequences.) Victorian attitudes towards children are most pronounced where older children are sent from Nigeria to join their parents and younger siblings. The emphasis on respect and obedience outweighs a concern for adjustment to life in Britain. Fathers, in the experience of the social worker quoted earlier, tend to beat the children into submission, resulting in eneuresis and other symptoms of distress. There were similar cases in the sample, where children who were not quick enough to meet their father's demands or achieve high standards in school work were beaten and showed signs of emotional distress.

Parents entertain high aspirations for their children but are not development-orientated in the sense of providing educational games or constructive toys.[1] But they are trained from an early age to be independent and helpful. They are expected to be able to answer the telephone by the time they are about five, and to take messages in the absence of their parents. Not many are systematically taught Ibo, for it is assumed that they will pick it up naturally, although many do not.

Children's attitudes towards adult strangers are polite and subdued. Spatial segregation in living arrangements ensures that they see relatively little of adults outside the family and even kin are encountered infrequently. Small children are handled freely by adult friends and relations of the couple. They are not expected to cling to their mothers. Dependence of this kind is regarded with disapproval and a mother who encourages it is criticised for failing to allow her child to mature. Discipline by adults other than the parents themselves is not regarded as interference by the parents as it might be, for

1. An autobiographical account of life in London by a young deserted Ibo wife is illuminating. Buchi Emecheta (1972) refers to the strange foreign habit of talking to a baby in its pram. An Ibo mother doing so might be regarded as a witch. p. 11.

instance, in an English home. Although the collective sentiment is weaker than apparently it is in Nigeria, Ibo children in London are regarded up to appoint as belonging to the community as a whole. Their welfare is the concern of everyone, though their immediate physical and emotional needs are met by their parents.

The presence or absence of children and the stage in the developmental cycle are some of the factors which determine the way in which leisure is spent. Leaving aside for the moment the question of determining factors some observations may be offered on leisure activities and the extent to which they are shared by Ibo husbands and wives in London.

The leisure time of most couples is curtailed by the routine of work and study, and the responsibilities of children and household. Almost invariably, however, Sunday is a day for visiting and entertaining. Since leisure activities as frequently take place in one's own home as outside it in the home of a friend or kinsman, jointness must be considered more than simply in terms of 'going out together' or 'going out separately' as Turner defines it. Rather, emphasis must be placed on the possession of mutual friends and time spent in their company, and on the course of events and sexual division of labour when friends are entertained at home. Conjugal roles in the sphere of leisure range widely between the joint and segregated ends of the continuum. Activities are undertaken jointly in several situations, as for instance when a couple have the same friends and visit each other with their children. An informant suggests that only younger couples have the same friends since the age gap between husband and wife is narrow. Couples who married several years ago tend to belong to widely separated age groups, hence belong to different social circles and visit their friends separately.[1] Observations made in the field suggest that although the age gap <u>has</u> diminished in recent years this does not significantly affect the pattern of leisure. Friends are as likely to be shared by older

1. Age and other background variables are discussed in the context of homogamy in mate selection in the final chapter.

couples as younger. Wives whose husbands are friends sometimes discover that they have someting in common. Occasionally the friendships develop simultaneously. An informant and his wife maintain close and friendly contact with a couple they met during the war. The informant came across the other man at a local bus-stop wearing a Biafra lapel button. It transpired that he lived close by and that the two men had common interests, both being graduates and practising their profession (one as a sociologist, the other as a biochemist). Their wives, it turned out, had attended the same teacher training college at home and again shared common professional interests, one trained in and practising social administration, the other housing management. Other cases exist of the husband and wife enjoying the friendship of another couple and exchanging frequent visits. Occasionally men meet each other through their wives but more often the reverse occurs.

Visits by one family to another at weekends appear to be the main form of joint leisure activity but it is a form which is not found in every household. It occurs invariably when the couple have kin in London who expect to see both of them from time to time. In some cases mutual visiting is deliberately curtailed to avoid the ill feeling and gossip which may arise in the conditions of hardship and competition which many Ibos experience. An informant does not visit people often because "it causes trouble...People read meanings into what you say, however well-meaning you are." She gives as an example a friend with six children who was offended by a casual remark about family planning. People gossip about the way the informant and her husband live. His presence in the kitchen arouses surprise and friendly derision among visitors whose roles are more segregated. Gossip over men friends, and the cost of entertaining itself, make people 'keep themselves to themselves'. (Normative and practical restraints on the marital relationship, in the form of public attitudes and economic necessity, are considered in greater detail later on.) Joint leisure activities occur also

when children are fostered, and the parents thus free to go out together at weekends to see friends. Theatregoing is an occasional past-time, when stage shows of particular interest to black minority groups are being presented. The same pattern of activities occurs in newly married or courting couples. The advent of a first baby creates a change in roles which become more segregated in leisure activities. The wife is immediately tied to the home and the husband goes out predominantly alone. Role segregation occurs not only in families with young children, however, It is common practice in the Ibo community for husbands and wives to spend their leisure periods separately and in different ways apart from attendance at local celebrations such as weddings and christenings.

The husband spends much of his time calling on friends and being visited by them. The wife's leisure period is passed less sociably. During the week she stays at home alone, watching television. At weekends she may go out with her husband, especially if a townsman or girl is getting married. Weddings offer one of the few chances she has for social intercourse with other Ibo women. It is not clear how widespread this pattern of segregated roles is, or whether it predominates over the type of jointness described above. Informants, both male and female, indicate that it is more common that the pattern of joint visiting and entertaining between whole families at weekends. Only a minority of the couples who were interviewed fell into the segregated category, perhaps because the sample included a disproportionate number of older, more prosperous couples. A husband in this category cannot afford, for status reasons, to 'go about' encouraging overfamiliarity and gossip but stays at home and lets others visit him. Additionally, the performance by such people of exacting occupational roles discourages mobility in the evenings, and family and household commitments restrict movement at weekends. Occupation, level of education and income, and the stage in the developmental cycle are all factors affecting the marital relationship.

A second aspect of segregated roles in leisure activities is the behaviour of the couple when friends are being entertained at home. Again it seems to be the pattern, although no statistical evidence can be produced to support the point, that wives adopt a more retiring posture when friends visit the house, particularly when they are friends of her husband. In company the otherwise vociferous woman is frequently quiet and withdrawn, making a contribution to the conversation only when called upon to do so and otherwise leaving the expression of views to her husband. This passivity also occurs when the couple are being entertained by friends. Only highly trained women tend to participate on equal terms with the men, and in the experience of one of them such behaviour by 'academic girls' is regarded with some disapproval by less well educated women. A university graduate whose husband has had no university education and whose friends and their wives similarly belong to a lower educational level, behaves unconventionally because she feels that as a citizen she has every right to discuss issues of common interest. However, she is aware that the other wives regard her as simply being 'different' by virtue of her education, and not to be emulated. The informant is aware that the other women are wondering 'why her husband allows her to join the men's conversation and behave like a man'. They themselves simply cook the meal, serve it, then make suitable interjections when called upon to do so. In their own homes they may withdraw altogether and occupy themselves in the kitchen or with the children. This pattern is less likely to occur when husbands and wives are well educated or youthful. When they are both young and highly educated and their friends are as well, roles are segregated on these occasions only to the extent that the wives prepare, serve and clear away the food.

The fourth major sphere of marital organisation involves finance. The majority of marital conflicts can be traced to conflicting role or expectations in respect of financial management and material status. In terms of role performance several patterns are visible. Since most wives are earning and some husbands

are not, variations occur in the control of the wife's income, in the degree of consultation and in the sharing of financial responsibilities. Expenditure falls into three categories: household needs and family maintenance (rent, food, children's clothing and fostering, fuel etc.); remittances to both families in Nigeria; and the personal needs of husband and wife (course fees, transport, clothes etc.)

There are four different tyoes of arrangement for the control of income and the use of financial resources. In one, both incomes go into a joint bank account and responsibility for expenditure is shared. One partner may pay the rent or mortgage, the other buy food, and both contribute towards the upkeep of the children. Each sends money and items of clothing to their respective families, and the husband sends things to his wife's people as well as his own as an obligation of marriage. When there is no regular pattern of control each partner informs the other in advance of spending unusual amounts (this is na obligation on the wife more than the husband) though a husband would not expect to be told that his wife planned to send small gifts to her younger brothers and sisters. In the second arrangement the wife works full-time and provides all that is needed while the husband continues to study. In the third, the husband collects his wife's wages and gives her an allowance for her personal needs. All living expenses and gifts to both families are met from her husband's account and she has no account of her own. If she wishes her family to benefit by her employment she requests her husband to send them some money and he generally does so. The final arrangement is one in which each partner has a separate account. Neither officially knows the other's financial position and a formal arrangement for the sharing of bills may or may not exist. In such cases the husband generally handles the larger commitments - mortgage payments etc. - automatically since he is ultimately responsible for the family as a whole. The most frequent arrangement is that in which the couple have a joint account and bills are shared. Next, is that in which the wife pays her wages into her husband's account.

Financial decisions and decisions affecting the family in general, are shared, though the sharing takes the form of consultation by the husband rather than full participation by the wife. Thus in the matter of house purchase a man normally consults his wife. Although husbands sometimes take decisions unilaterally, women do not alone decide when to buy a house, when to have a second child, and how to bring up the first. But women's views are normally sought. An informant allowed his wife to choose their second car after the birth of their second child, to spoil her a little. "She knows I can make any decision I want at any time", so this concession did not in any way undermine his authority in the home. Women, too, described their husbands as being definitely in control over them, however much their views are sought. In the opinion of another male informant it was worth consulting his wife for her intelligent contributions and for the sake of domestic harmony. He regarded her as a partner, almost equal (but not quite). Within the home women are subordinate and do not challenge their husband's authority. They are 'quiet' and 'submissive' and'show respect,' expressions used frequently by both men and women to convey the passivity of wives. The 'unruly' wife by contrast is one who answers back, and challenges her husband's authority. Wives have influence, but not authority. To the extent that decision-making is a dimension of conjugal roles, and the distribution of authority a contributary factor towards jointness and segration, it is relevant to a discussion of role performance. It is, however, difficult to describe authority in isolation from the various spheres of marital organisation without entering into a discussion of norms.

Before embarking on the subject of norms or role expectations, an earlier point must be taken up. Platt and other writers have drawn attention to the varying degrees of cooperation in the different spheres of marital organisation and the tendency for individual couples to achieve different scores of jointness in each. This observation holds for the Ibo sample. Couples with joint roles in leisure sometimes have segregated roles in household tasks and childrearing.

Joint roles in financial affairs are found with segregated leisure activities and child care. An example or two may clarify the point. The Bs are a young couple with a small child who is cared for during the day by a foster mother. In the evenings and at weekends Mrs. B looks after him at home. Her husband is out for much of the time visiting friends and on Saturdays going to football matches with one of them. Mrs. B's friends and townspeople, some of whom live in the neighbourhood, frequently call to see her and she entertains them in her husband's absence. They tend to go alone to public functions, too. The husband was encountered by himself at a send-off party and the wife at a townsman's wedding. Their roles in respect of leisure activities are clearly segregated. In financial affairs, however, their roles are joint. Both work full-time in white collar occupations. They have separate bank accounts but cooperate in paying bills for rent and food , and for fostering.

The A's are a middle aged couple owning several houses. Both are employed full-time, Mr. A in a well paid professional post, and they have no children. They do not go out much during the week but at weekends visit friends together or entertain them at home. On these occasions Mrs. A who has a forceful personality takes full part in the conversation, to the extent that Mr. A "can't get a word in edgeways", (in the words of a close friends of theirs.) In the matter of household tasks a division of labour is upheld. Mr. A's duty is to protect his wife, not to wash dishes, he says. It is his wife's duty to undertake domestic work while he handles the financial side of things. The couple have a joint bank account. There is no need for Mrs. A to have an account of her own for she has no separate needs. (Mrs. A concurred with this point). For instance, Mr. A will send money to her family if she wishes it. For her to have a separate account means that she is not working for the benefit of the family, which is inconsistent with the role of a wife and the purpose of marriage. Despite the possession of a joint account their roles are thus segregated in the financial sphere to the extent that Mr. A has the task of meeting major commitments and

Mrs. A must mention to him any additional need, apart from regular personal requirements of clothing and so on, which she may have, before drawing the required sum from their joint account or asking him to deal with the matter for her. In the sphere of housework, too, their roles are more segregated than joint. In leisure activities, however, they do things jointly, and have the same set of friends.

Contained in this description of role performance are statements of norms, the couples' views about appropriate behaviour between husband and wife in the management of domestic affairs. The As concur on the matter of a joint account, though Mrs. A is less happy about his refusal to help her with the housework. When circumstances of life in London compel her to work full time she feels, a husband should assist in the home. The Bs similarly disagree on the appropriateness of Mr. B's behaviour. Mrs. B is unhappy with his independent leisure activities and wishes that their roles were more joint in this sphere. She feels isolated and lonely when he is away from home and embarrassed to attend local celebrations without him. The infrequent visits of her townspeople, who appriciate the situation, cannot make up for it.

These two cases suggest that the inconsistency in jointness is problematic, the result of a disjunction between expectations and performance, attendant on structural circumstances. The inconsistency is suggestive in the B's case of marital disharmony. While such inconsistency does explain some cases of marital instability, however, it does not have the same effect in every marriage. The As for instance, are described by their friends as 'successfully married' and give every appearance of mutual adjustment and stability.

There is, in fact, an extra dimension of jointness which explains this situation and at the same time provides a clue to marital breakdown. Edgell points out that discussions of the jointness of conjugal roles often emphasise the sphere of leisure,[1] revealing a class and cultural bias. If jointness, or companionship between husband and wife, is seen simply in terms of activities,

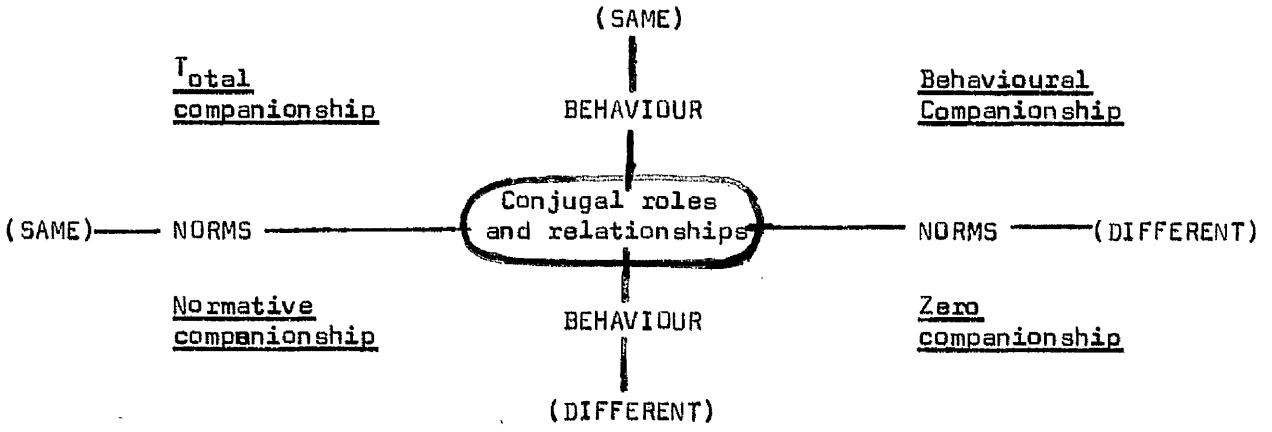
1. Edgell (1972) p 456-7.

especially of leisure activities, ie. going out together, then it is hardly surprising that roles rapidly become more segregated after the birth of the first child and are segregated from the beginning in working class marriages where such common activity is often neither expected nor present. Yet such marriages are not lacking in consensus. Congruence of expectations is itself a form of jointness. It implies normative as opposed to behavioural jointness, and varies independently from the latter. Thus roles which are segregated in activities associated with housework, childcare, leisure and finance are often joint at the normative level. Normative jointness implies a shared definition of conjugal roles, a world of shared meanings and experiences. Taking Edgell's discussion one stage further it may be argued that normative segregation is a key factor in marital instability. The lack of consensus about the respective roles of husband and wife, induced by the disjunction between traditional expectations and contemporary circumstances, is the basis of marital breakdown in the Ibo community.

Edgell's more refined concept of jointness, which he calls companionship, is illuminating when applied to the Ibo situation. The two dimensions of jointness - behavioural and normative - together produce four ideal types of companionship.[1] The first is <u>normative companionship</u> where "the same expectations and/or ideals regarding conjugal roles are shared by the spouses." <u>Behavioural companionship</u> occurs when the same activities are shared. In situations where "there is consistency between these two forms of companionship we can speak of <u>total companionship</u>." Finally "in situations where neither behavioural nor normative companionship are present there will be conjugal role divergence,... and this may be termed <u>zero companionship</u>". In the couples studied by Edgell, behavioural and normative forms of companionship and combinations of them tended to predominate, suggesting that most couples develop "a working compromise between complete separateness and complete togetherness." Total and zero companionship, representing excessive fusion and divergence respectively, tend to occur less frequently.

1. Ibid p 457-8.

Ignoring for the moment the multidimensional character of jointness established earlier (ie. the tendency for couples to achieve different scores in different activities) it can be said that all types of companionship occur in the Ibo population, with normative companionship predominating. Following Edgell, the four basic types of 'companionship marriage' are represented diagramatically:



Normative jointness exists in most Ibo marriages, whether activities are undertaken jointly or separately. Couples like the As whose roles tend to be segregated at the behavioural level in accordance with the values and expectations of both (normative companionships) tend to be in a majority. Some couples enjoy total companionship, undertaking activities jointly and sharing ideals of conjugal roles. Normative segregation exists in only a minority of cases. Zero companionship occurs rarely, the couple having neither common standards and expectations of conjugal roles nor activities which they undertake together or interchangeably. Such relationships, as we shall see, tend to be unstable and attract the attention of outsiders who are called upon to help. The fourth ideal type, behavioural companionship, is empirically the least common. It occurs in situations where a wife is compelled to make a financial contribution to the home against her will or support a student husband voluntarily while expecting greater companionship in respect of leisure and household tasks than he is prepared to give (eg. the Bs); or where a husband is forced by social pressures

exerted on the wife's behalf to give her some assistance with children and housework although he cannot be persuaded to agree that such cooperation is desirable in the circumstances. This category, too, contains mostly unstable relationships.

Edgell notes in his conclusion that "the challenge is to discover the detailed ways in which the different structural conditions and types of marriage are interrelated." In the present study, equally, the objective is to relate the different types of marital relationship to the circumstances of the Ibos in London; to discpver why some couples enjoy normative as well as behavioural companionship and why some do not, in consequence of which their marriages risk dissolution.

Turner, for his Leadgill sample, suggests the following factors in the marital relationship;[1] occupation, place of work, course of work, presence of children relatives or unrelated persons in the home, and the extra-family commitments of each spouse. Additionally he specifies some which determine network connectedness and are probably relevant to the marital relationship, although the Leadgill survey results are inconclusive: neighbourhood, stage of developmental cycle, educational level, geographical mobility, and local or cosmopolitan orientation. Other writers mention variables such as regional variations,[2] the presence or absence of kin in the neighbourhood, and network density. Platt[3] refers to situational constraints. If, for instance, a couple decide to move away from their circle of kin and friends in pursuit of economic opportunities they will be thrown more together, both for lack of other social resources and because the familiar sources of household aid - kin and friends - are missing. The decision of a wife to work constrains her activities in the home which puts pressure on the husband to undertake some of the tasks commonly defined as women's work. Indeed, many norms, suggests Platt, are post hoc rationalisations to resolve inconsistencies induced by situational constraints of this sort.

1. Turner (1967) p 123-4. 2. Harrell-Bond (1969). 3. Platt (1969)p 293-4.

Platt suggests that normative constraints are more powerful in a stable, traditionalistic setting with strong cultural uniformities, while practical constraints characterise a situation of individual mobility and cultural heterogeneity. The Ibos are in such a situation, and observation confirms the strength of practical constraint though normative constraint is by no means absent. Practical constraints consist of the almost universal need for a wife to work, added to the initial migration in search of educational opportunity which divorces the couple from their circle of close kin and friends. These constraints call for jointness in household tasks and childcare, and for consultation by the husband in matters requiring his wife's financial assistance. The economic situation with its attendant hardships throws husbands and wives together and inhibits their desire for the company of friends who might gossip about their circumstances and way of life. Normative constraints exist in the form of clear prescriptions for conduct upheld by kin, townspeople and friends.

Structural pressures and normative influences on the marital relationship may sometimes run counter to each other, with consequences which are discernible in cases of marital breakdown. To understand the nature of marriage in the Ibo community it is perhaps most illustrating to consider the limiting cases, the exceptions to the general rule of marital stability, concentrated in the categories of zero companionship and behavioural jointness. While such relationships are not typical of the majority they are analytically significant in showing the interaction of key variables and the effect of the interaction on social organisation.

Marital Conflict. Conflict is sometimes concealed by the definition of one partner, normally the wife, as 'mentally unbalanced'. Several cases were encountered of wives whose reactions to an unpalatable situation were written off as unbalanced by those to whom they were least acceptable, namely the husbands. More often, however, normative segregation, manifested in different definitions of the scope of the marriage alliance and the consequent obligations of husband

and wife respectively, produces conflict which is recognised as such by the couple and interested parties. A conflict of interest occurs at several levels; between husband and wife, between the couple and their kin, and between the husband and wife in defence of the interest of their respective families. The second of these does not concern us here since it involves no conflict within the marriage. Conflict at other levels may be examined in terms of immediate causes or precipitating factors. The description concentrates upon marriages of several years duration, and generally contracted in Nigeria. The effect on marital stability of unconventional procedure - contracting the union in the war with the attendant disparities in background - is dealt with in the final chapter. The seriousness of disputes varies from the single unrepeated quarrel over a specific incident or facet of behaviour to the accumulated tension and recurrent arguments which result in dissolution. In the latter case the causes are often multiple. The precipitating or last-straw factor, and the contentious issue in the less disruptive quarrels of the first type, may be one of several factors. The factors can be grouped into two broad categories. The first has to do with the financial and social standing of the couple. It includes the related factors of the amount, source and disposal of income; financial obligations towards the families of husband and wife; the level of skill, training and earning power of each partner; the status of the family in the London community; and the distribution of authority in the home. The second category is more residual in character although the component factors are, again, related. They include leisure activities, problems associated with children, the performance of household tasks. This category, which involves a minority - 15 out of the 37 disputes on which details were obtained - is dealt with first.

Quarrels arise over the way in which leisure is spent by one partner or the other. Wives object to their husband's unilateral enjoyment of company outside the home, particularly their freedom to associate with members of the opposite sex. Occasionally girlfriends are brought home and wives publicly humiliated.

Dependence on the spouse for entertainment, and boredom in his or her sole company, cause strain and friction. A young couple who are surrounded by their kin and have separate interests in Nigeria are forded into each other's company for much of the time in London, but have few mutual interests. A young woman described the main problem in her marital relationship as being 'nothing to talk about'. She and her husband quarrel a lot, for neither satisfies the other's social needs. She finds her husband too quiet, to fond of staying at home and watching television, too selective in his choice of company, while she herself is sociable and gregarious, likes to chat and receive visitors. He for his part says that his wife talks too much and is 'too soft' (ie. easily hurt by his criticism of her). Since being in Britain they had begun to feel that they did not really know each other. The strain of being at home all day, as in the case of this young mother, is compounded by a sense of acute social isolation in a wife whose husband spends his leisure time in the company of his friends. A wife's loneliness and exclusion from her husband's social activities is a common cause of complaint. In one case the exclusion was carried to the extent of sending a wife out of the room when friends called to see the husband, on whatever pretext.

Men, for their part, restrict their wives' freedom to socialise outside the home, a freedom already limited by children and housework. Husbands occasionally show exterme jealousy of their wives, suspecting liaisons with men. One husband, whose wife eventually left him, went to great lengths to limit her opportunity to meet people. He kept a constant check on her activities, observing her at work, meeting her from the bus stop, and removing the wick from the paraffin heater when he went out at night, to discourage the supposed lover. As in the case quoted in the introduction, a husband's jealousy of his wife is sometimes rationalised as the fear of undesirable influences on a wife allowed to associate with the people of her choice. Disputes occur when wives go out without informing

their husbands or are unable or unwilling to say where they have been when they return. In several cases such unexplained absences have been the last straw factor in a difficult relationship. According to a decidedly bitter female informant whose marriage had ended in divorce, the dependence and suspicion is mutual. Men expect to accompany their wives everywhere and women to know where their husbands are going. Both situations are peculiar to life in London, and conducive to strain and breakdown.

Disputes arise over children. Often it is simply a matter of physically caring for them. Wives leave home and children to their husbands so that they can see for themselves "what it is like trying to bring up a child". A woman who longs to begin a course of study is prevented from doing so by repeated pregnancies, often the result of the father's wish that she should be a complete wife-ie. produce a family - before fulfilling herself in that way. The cost of bringing up children, especially payment of the foster mother, is a source of contention. In marriage between Ibos and West Indians according to the welfare agency which deals with many of them in the context of fostering arrangements, arguments arise as to which set of grandparents should care for the children while the parents are studying in London. While both father and mother agree that the children are best sent 'home', the patrilineal Ibo assumes that his own family should receive them, while the West Indian mother, whose own family traditions are matrifocal or mother-centred, wants them to be sent to her own mother. No cases of this sort were directly encountered, however.

The most frequent source of marital disharmony in respect of children is the difference in approach to child rearing between husband and wife, and in standards of behaviour each parent requires from the child. Accusations of leniency meet with counter-accusations of over-severity. The difference in approach is most noticable when children are sent from Nigeria to join parents from whom they were separated by the Nigeria-Biafra war. Such, for instance, is the case of Mr. and Mrs. A who approached the welfare agency to have the

oldest and youngest of their five children fostered. The youngest was below school age and there was no one at home to look after him since Mrs. A worked to support the family while her husband studied full-time. The oldest needed fostering in an English home for he had just arrived in Britain after an eight year separation from his parents, and spoke no English. They had in any case an acute accommodation problem. The social worker in charge of the agency soon unearthed problems in the marital relationship itself. They concerned the care of the children, and in particular the eldest who had just arrived and showed signs of emotional disturbance. He was extremely shy and ambivalent towards his parents, and suffered from bedwetting and other nervous traits. His father's attitude towards him was harsh. He had high aspirations for all his children, especially the eldest, and blamed his wife for their lack of progress at school. In his view she kept them up too late at night. Mrs. A retorted that her husband said nothing but 'Lesson! lesson! lesson!' That was all he was concerned about.

Husbands not infrequently object that their wives are spoiling the children. In one case the older child, five years old, was very quiet and unable to answer the telephone. The younger child was often in his mother's arms and unwilling to go to strangers. Two adult cousins of her husband visited the family and insisted on holding the child, who protested vigorously. His mother rushed to his defence, and told them to leave the house. Her husband was extremely angry with both her and the children, whom he thought were spoilt by their mother. Their exchange of words was followed by a beating, and the woman left the house that night for refuge with a senior kinsman of her husband.

Another source of strain in this particular case was the husband's opinion that his wife was a slovenly housewife whose housework fell far below the standards he expected, and her own resentment over his failure to help her in the home. Several cases of this kind were encountered. In one a wife ran away because her husband was beating her. His explanation was that she was not keeping up to the

standards he required. In defence she pointed out that she was working full-time and could not do both jobs satisfactorily. In another case a wife has to take the two children to the nanny, do a full day's work in the office and return to her housework. Her husband refuses to help since it is her duty to manage their domestic affairs. His wife would like to return to Nigeria with the children while her husband remains to complete his studies, and may well leave him if the situation does not improve. While some men accept that without their help their wives would be overburdened and their marriages undermined, others describe women who expect help as 'Europeanised'. They feel that their wives not only desire their help but take it for granted, and so refuse on principle to engage in household tasks. Housework, like child rearing and the pursuit of leisure activities, is frequently a cause of distress and argument, but does not by itself disrupt a marriage. Conflict of a more serious kind is induced by factors in the second category. The majority of cases of separation and divorce reflect dissention based on economic circumstances. The relative education of husband and wife, and the social standing of the couple. The same factors account also, however, for many of the milder disputes which are settled quickly with the help of a few friends or relations.

The most common single cause of marital dispute is finance. In combination with related factors - the status of the family, the greater earning power of the wife, obligations towards kin etc. - it accounts for the majority of cases (25 out of 37). A typical case which combines several of these features is the following.

> Mr. M came for a course in surveying and qualified in due course. He has a low status job in a surveyor's office. His wife is a nurse who is more highly trained and better paid than her husband. Arguments have arisen over Mrs M's salary. Mr. M wants her to pay it into his account from which he will give her pocket money and a housekeeping allowance. He feels that her place is in the home, under his thumb, and does not allow her to put her case to their friends and relations who would doubtless agree that he was being unjust and unreasonable. When they quarrel, therefore, no witnesses

are permitted. On one occasion the couple fought all day and Mrs. M was forbidden by her husband to call in friends to arbitrate. In the evening the police were called by neighbours and since the wife threatened to sleep in a tube station they escorted her half way to the house of an Ibo colleague and friend of hers where she arrived 'looking like a mad woman'. In August 1971 the couple separated.

What the wife does with her income is a frequent source of contention. A woman wanted to send money to her brother, and her husband wanted her to send it to his father. He maintained that it was not her money, although she earned it, but belonged to the family of which he was head and hence entitled to dispose of it. The elder called in to deal with the case agreed with him. The girl left her husband and by the end of the fieldwork period was still 'somewhere in London', her whereabouts unknown.

Obligations towards families in Nigeria are difficult to meet, given the cost of living. Parents and kin do not realise the financial problems of their son, brother or half-brother abroad and make demands which the young couple find excessive. Limited resources introduce the need for selection and both husband and wife feel that the interests of their own side are being ignored. A husband bought three lengths of cloth and sent them all to his mother. His wife was disturbed by his neglect of her own mother and consulted a senior townsman who advised her to say nothing. After a month she mentioned it to her husband and asked him for money to buy cloth for her mother. This led to a quarrel and a telephone call to the elder who went to the house in the early hours of the morning and found the couple fighting. He brought the wife home to stay with him and his wife, and in the morning the four of them talked the matter over. The senior man told the junior to follow his own example: to discuss together the needs of both families and help both. The husband should protect his wife's family's interests as well as his own. That was what marriage meant.

Sometimes the act of assistance which causes offence to one partner takes a different form. When a relation is helped in Britain it is easier to regard his or her acceptance of material assistance as exploitation of traditional

obligations; as 'sponging'. A man's niece was living with him and his wife as his responsibility. The wife felt that it was unreasonable 'in this hard place' for the girl to be supported by them. She showed her discontent by demanding identical treatment. Everything the niece obtained, the wife wanted too. The man's people at home began to regard her as a potential trouble-maker between themselves and their son. "She doesn't want to help us" was the implication of her behaviour. Frequently when assistance cannot be given to kin in Nigeria at the required rate it is assumed that "the wife is eating all the money," which causes strain in the marital relationship. In the case in question the niece left the house and moved into a flat with some other Ibo girls, becoming self supporting like them.

The customary assistance to younger relations, particularly female, causes trouble between husband and wife which is generally resolved in the wife's favour. The marital relationship in London tends to be closer than that between a man and his remoter kin. In violation of traditional expectations a man under pressure from his wife told his young female relation to stop visiting them so frequently. He told her on the telephone that she was now grown up and should not be imposing on them in this way. In this case the cause was not financial so much as sexual jealousy and fear of repercussions from the girl's father in London. The latter disapproved of his daughter's independence (she should have been living at home with him) and blamed her cousin for aiding and abbetting her.

Arguments arise over the payment of bills. Money 'does not circulate properly'. Either the husband refuses to pay bills so long as his wife is earning and in a position to help him, or the wife is earning as much or more than her husband but resents having to support him. Each expects to be supported by the other, the wife because in Ibo custom a man takes responsibility for his family, the husband because his full-time study is in the interests of his wife and their family who will benefit in the long run from his qualifications, and the rapid completion of his course will ensure their speedy return to Nigeria. Several

cases were encountered of bills unpaid, electricity cut off, and mortgage payments unmade. When financial obligations are jointly incurred, as when a husband and wife purchase a house together, the arrangement sometimes collapses and the total relationship is undermined.

The most frequent source of trouble appears to be the man's inability to obtain work commensurate with his qualifications, in consequence of which his wife, often better qualified, must prop him up financially and socially. The situation is exposed as often by the man's personal disorganisation as by his wife's complaints. Non-payment of bills, refusal to work, gambling and wife-beating, are the result of frustration and a loss of authority in the home as the main breadwinner. The gap between achievement and aspiration, both financial and social, affects both men and women. The failure to obtain qualifications prolongs the stay in Britain in material and social conditions which fall far below what was expected at the outset. Husbands who got used to earning and spending during the war find it difficult to return to their studies and their wives are faced either with the prospect of an indefinite stay in Britain, where they lack help in the home, material wealth and social status, the anticipated rewards of effort; or asharp drop in living standards created by the resumption of full-time study.

The prospect of not going home in the foreseeable future undermines the marital relationship. Strain is particularly acute when the wife qualified before her husband and he is unable to provide the status symbols enjoyed by her friends and colleagues. Jealousy over houses and cars produces quarrels between husband and wife. Some women leave their husbands and return home with the children. Others desert their families but remain in Britain.

The unqualified man depends on people outside the family for advice and decisions. He is not sought by others for this purpose which makes his wife feel inferior and undermines his authority in the home. His failure to succeed in

the competition for material possessions after the war created an 'unruly' wife. Her lack of respect for her husband stems from his failure to achieve the socially valued goals of the community: qualifications and property. Instability is most marked when there is a disparity in educational attainment, the wife qualifying before the husband. Details were obtained of cases in which the wife left the husband for better educated men, or was driven out by her husband's over-insistence on submission and obedience, in defence of his threatened position as head of the household. This situation characterised the first recorded case of Ibo divorce in Britain, Ohuchukwu and Ohuchukwu.[1] The couple had married in Nigeria by customary law in 1949. The husband came to study law and sent for his wife in 1953. They remarried in a Register Office. Mrs. Ohuchukwu obtained her nursing qualifications before her husband passed his bar examinations and there was conflict. He began to meet her at the bus stop, allowed her no freedom to associate with other people, and insisted on the traditional obedience and respect. The wife went to a lawyer who conducted a case in cruelty. The judge dissolved the English register office wedding but not the Nigerian customary law marriage, over which the court had no jurisdiction.[2]

Several modern equivalents have been encountered. In two of them the wives have graduated from universities while their husbands are unable to pass the professional examinations for which they have come. In another, court action has been precipitated by the wife's adultery with a fellow student. A common pattern in all of them is the husband's arrival to study, his wife joining him and being educated at his expense, and his inability to pass examinations and sometimes to obtain work as well. This is followed by friction, 'unruliness' on the part of the wife, and repressive authoritarian behaviour by the husband,

1. 1960 Weekly Law Reports Vol. 1 p.183, substantiated by informants who know of the case and know the couple.(The husband is said to be currently practising law in London.)
2. This set a precedent in English Law. The recognition of dual status marriage revealed a conflict of laws, the reason why the case was recorded.

often involving physical violence. The wife deserts and finally there follows court action for legal separation or divorce.

The consistent ill-treatment of one spouse by another characterises many conflict-ridden relationships. Men reluctant to lose their role as master in the home insist on traditional respect and obedience. Some demand complete submission in every sphere of activity and aspect of decision making, whether financial, recreational, to do with children or housework. In households where husbands show too little consideration of wives too little respect, trouble ensues. The attitudes themselves express an unsatisfactory domestic arrangement. Disrespect on the part of a wife is caused by strain in the various sectors referred to above. The financial and social strain of supporting an unsuccessful or student husband, and the difficulties of managing financially on a low income which must meet the needs of accommodation, food, fuel, clothing, fostering, assistance to needy relations at home, and other expenses, take their toll. The absence of domestic help and social standing, physical restraint by small children and social restraint by a husband who expects complete accountability while he himself remains unaccountable for actions and decisions impose additional strains on the relationship and cause 'unruliness'. Husbands are domineering or demanding because they fail to live up to their own and their wife's expectations, and fear the loss of authority in the home.

Repression is justified often in the name of tradition. In the experience of one wife, most Ibo husbands in Britain are traditionalists not in the sense that they conform to customary standards of behaviour but that they justify the exploitation of their wives and the repression of their children in the name of tradition. They expect their wives to run the house and make a financial contribution while they 'put their feet up after a hard day's study'. In the view of an informant there is in fact no basis in tradition for such behaviour. The father is a remote, awe-inspiring figure to whom one goes if the need arises.

A woman marries a man to share his wealth, and a man marries only if he is in a position to maintain a family. When a woman takes an equally advanced course of study and helps to support, or completely supports, her husband financially as happens in Britain there is no justification for domination or a feeling of innate superiority in men.

Leaving aside for a moment the question of the source of expectations and normative influences on behaviour, be they traditional or otherwise, a summary of marital conflict is called for. Evidence produced so far indicated conflicting expectations or normative segregation, in some cases superimposed on behavioural segregation to produce a situation of zero companionship. It was earlier suggested that the main theoretical problem is to relate the degree of behavioural or normative segregation or jointness to the structural characteristics of couples in the four categories. A sparsity of data makes it difficult to analyse conflict-ridden relationships fully in terms of the structural circumstances of particular Ibo couples. However, after looking at the superficial causes of domestic quarrels certain general patterns are perceptible.

There is evidence that the basis of segregation and of the ensuing marital conflict lies in financial difficulties and social isolation; in the gap between aspiration and achievement. In short, the evidence points to a conflict of role expectations created by contemporary social and economic circumstances. What these expectations are may be clarified by looking at the response of the couples and of outsiders to a crisis in their marital relationship.

The Settlement of Marital Disputes. The approach to marital problems among the Ibos in London emphasises privacy and reconciliation. The matter is contained within the circle of relations and friends as far as possible, to avoid gossip and a drop in prestige attendant on failure in the domestic sphere. A rupture of relations is strenuously avoided (unless the marriage was contracted in inauspicious circumstances) and the couple are encouraged to overcome their difficulties and live together in peace. It is firmly upheld that in Ibo tradition divorce never occurs and that in Britain, by contrast, the ease of breakdown and disregard of publicity are characteristic.

Two issues present themselves for analysis. The first concerns procedure, the range of individuals involved in dispute settlement and their precise roles. The second concerns the outcome: the nature of decisions made and advice offered by adjudicators, the values expressed and standards upheld by their judgements.

In Iboland, the conduct and wellbeing of the couple, their visible success or failure, is a matter of concern to their respective families, the more so if the latter helped to arrange the marriage in the first place. The stability of marriage was guaranteed in traditional society by the restraint excercised on the couple by both families. A wife could not automatically expect her parent's support in an argument. A husband could not illtreat his wife without jeopardising relations between a large number of people. When quarrels occurred each appealed to the other's people and in the last resort the wife ran home, whence her husband collected her a few days later.

This pattern of events, described as traditional by informants, provides the model for behaviour by most couples who get into difficulties, and upheld as the most desirable by older people who become involved in the settlement of marital disputes. The circumstances of life in London, however, impose certain restraints and call for a modification to the traditional procedure. Most important is the absence of parents and close kin in the parental generation. Very few couples are able to turn directly to their parents for help when it is needed, though parents take a traditional interest in the success of the relationship. A young wife received a letter from her father-in-law soon after her arrival in Britain in 1970. It enquired after the couple's welfare and urged her to let him know if anything went wrong in their relationship, so that he could put matters right. In the absence of parents to buttress married life, couples turn to other people, still within the confines of conventional behaviour. The different categories include other kin, townspeople, friends and Ibo strangers who are qualified in certain ways to give assistance. These categories may be considered in turn.

Any person related by descent - nwanne - or affinity is eligible for the role of peacemaker. There is evidence that the seriousness of disputes, measured in terms of their outcome, is determined in part by the presence or absence of kin. The circle of relatives in London limits friction between husband and wife. Theattempt is made in most cases to reconcile the couple before the matter becomes public knowledge.

The procedure is for the wronged wife to flee to a senior kinsman or woman where her husband knows he can find her, and he goes to put his case later. A wronged husband similarly telephones or visits a kinsman to ask for advice and moral support, and occasionally practical assistance in tracing his departed wife. Alternatively a relation may be called in by the couple or other people to intervene in a violent situation. When relations on both sides are available the dispute is generally settled by a series of more or less formal meetings,after which the couple are advised on how best to overcome their problems and continue living together. Where there are kin in London, separation is averted and recourse to the courts comparatively rare.

Problems arise when there are no kin, or the only nwanne are too young and disqualified by their ignorance of life from being of assistance. Alternatively a senior kinsman may by his own behaviour be the last person from whom help is sought. A wife whose husband was beating her for shouting at him in front of a third person ran to a matrilateral kinsman of her husband for help. However, she said, he did not even cease in his shameful activities with X (a young woman with whom he was having an affair) to listen to her. When there are no suitable kin in London to turn to, either because they are too young or promiscuous, problems are often contained until it is too late for reconciliation. The breach becomes public and legal action follows.

Occasionally it is too late even for that . In one case the level to which the relationship had deteriorated became known only when the mental state of the wife impressed on members of the local community that something was wrong.

It appeared that her customary law husband had started an affair with an English girl and decided to marry her by English law. He spent holidays with her family in Scotland and brought her home, forcing his wife to sleep on the carpet. On learning of this state of affairs the townspeople summoned the husband to a meeting and told him that if he wished to marry the girl he should send his customary law wife home and maintain two households. His immediate response was that it was none of their business. To this they replied that if a second warning was necessary they would write to his family. After two weeks the man apologised to the meeting. His behaviour, he explained, was the result of anxiety over his wife who had become mentally sick. In similar cases the wives are sent home 'mentally ill' before this stage is reached. In this case local people perceived the difficulty and intervened in time to protect the interests of the wife. The young man began to 'mend his ways'.

More often townspeople are resorted to outside the formal meeting, as members of the parental generation and representatives of the couple's parents abroad. It is the norm for local community leaders to act <u>in loco parentis</u> although the obligation is not automatically recognised by either side. A union president made a point of thanking a young woman who came to seek refuge in his house for her consideration. He was gratified by this show of respect. In twenty out of the forty cases for which detailed information on the pattern of events was available, disputes were settled with the help of kin, elders and friends.

The sequence of events which local elders are called upon is similar to that in which kin are involved. The peacemaker may speak to the other spouse privately to learn his or her point of view and persuade him or her to see the other side. A formal confrontation between the two parties may occur, the decision being taken in camera and judgement delivered to the young couple by someone from the side of the guiltier party. Blame is accorded to both sides, though the husband may be told later in private if his offence is greatest.

(If he is rebuked before his wife his authority is undermined and she may become unruly). Occasionally a state of affairs is disclosed to a formal union meeting, but only in the last resort. Normally townspeople are sought as respected individuals who have some knowledge of the situation and influence over the spouse, and can be relied upon to keep a secret.

The undesirability of exposing marital disorder to the full union meeting except as a last resort rests on two factors. The first is the tendency of political opponents in the London community to use evidence of domestic problems against a man in the competition for influence and office. Private failure of this kind has social and political implications[1] and when, as it often the case, the union consists of peers in terms of age and status, rather than elders who are not rivals, it is desirable to avoid washing one's dirty linen in public. The other factor follows from this homogeneity. "All are guilty" of matrimonial offences, said an informant whose local community contains a particularly disreputable elder. None are fit to judge cases involving extra-marital affairs.

Not only are some elders guilty of the offences which they are called upon to condemn. They also seek to make financial and political profit out of assisting both parties at the same time. In a particular case an elderly townsman was, as is customary, in receipt of information from both the husband's and the wife's people. He might eventually have brought them together for a formal discussion of the issues. Having heard the wife's case he promised to help her. He was also, however, providing legal advice for the husband, a one-time political opponent, for a substantial fee and for the assurance of political support in future.

Unrelated townspeople, for their part, are often as reluctant to become involved as others are to seek their help. Occasionally their capacity to help

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1. It was for this reason difficult to obtain detailed evidence of specific cases. At no time were names disclosed by informants (though some emerged by default) though people were happy to speculate on the causes of marital breakdown and offer their own theories.

is limited by one partner's refusal to take them seriously. Their intervention can only be effective if both parties accept the premise on which it is made: that collective interest of which they as elders are the guardians predominates over individual interest; and that their concern and involvement is thus legitimate and their judgement binding. In one case the husband called in the local people who on arrival found the wife to be 'very disrespectful', and so departed. In this case, as we shall see, the wife believed that her interests could best be safeguarded by court action, and she held the local elders in contempt.

There are other, more common objections to involvement. An elderly man who had been involved in several cases indicated that intervention, even when successful, has consequences which are less welcome. The peacemaker is accused of taking sides, and even of leading the errant partner astray in the first place. The tendency for reunited couples to turn on the agents of their reconciliation lies behind the firm refusal to become involved in any domestic quarrels, which was encountered on several occasions. Such a refusal is met with only from unrelated people and contemporaries of the couple. No evidence exists of local elders refusing to give advice, however reluctant they might be, for they recognise a moral obligation to the couple and to their kin in Nigeria to give assistance if called upon to do so, and often to intervene uninvited. A refusal on their part would have consequences of which they perhaps are not conscious, for the strength and distinctiveness of the group, and for their own position within it. However, the manner of their intervention in the name of tradition to restrain a wife from going to court, and their adoption of 'traditional' criteria in assessing a case, indicate an awareness of this fact. The attitude of the elders is best conveyed through one or two case histories which involve attempts by one party to 'violate tradition' by terminating the union in the courts. Before dealing with cases involving legal action, and with the content of decisions, something must be said about other categories of people whose intervention is still consistent with traditional procedure.

The most frequent response to disharmony is to appeal to close friends, whether or not they are townspeople. A best friend, often one who acted as best man and hence is a chief witness of the union, plays the part of confidant. Fearful and unhappy wives turn to their colleagues and friends. Any Ibo who has influence on the spouse may be called upon to persuade him or her to change his or her ways. Sometimes complete strangers with a reputation for wisdom and skill in dealing with matrimonial affairs are begged for assistance. Although this may be construed as exposure to outsiders the emphasis is still on reconciliation, and to the extent that all Ibos are regarded as brothers in relation to non-Ibos the affair remains within the circle of kin. Included in this category of 'other Ibos' are solicitors and barristers required to define an individual's legal rights. Often the aim is not to initiate court action for divorce but to counteract 'customary' intervention by local people. Wives under pressure from their husband's people to "pay attention to custom" bring actions for harrassment and obtain court injunctions to restrain them. In one such case the husband, in turn, consulted an Ibo barrister on his next move. The barrister advised him to obtain a letter from the people at home empowering the elders, as leaders of the local community in London, to solve the dispute by 'customary' methods. (It is not known whether this tactic was effective.)

A final response which stops short of unconventional behaviour (ie. litigation) is an appeal to non-Ibos who belong to certain occupational groups: priests, professors and social workers. Often the nature of the problem is disclosed in the course of a meeting arranged on a different pretext. A request for assistance with accommodation or fostering arrangements may conceal a marital problem which the social worker or welfare officer concerned is quick to notice. An Ibo member of a community relations council has cases of this sort regularly referred to him by the local authority housing and welfare departments. Priests are appealed to as sympathetic outsiders with some influence over the spouse.

A priest with many years' experience in Iboland, now working in North London, is consulted because, he says, he knows the couples' parents, or because he married (and in some cases even christened) the couples themselves. College lecturers are less often appealed to, for personal details are kept from non-Ibo colleagues and teachers as far as possible. One of the few cases encountered involved a non-Ibo wife who sought help from her Ibo husband's professor at London University, although she had been forbidden to do so. This case suggests that people most likely to turn to outsiders for help while not wishing to terminate the union by embarking on court action, are in some sense marginal to the community. Like the non-Ibo wife (a girl from the South-Eastern State of Nigeria) they are perhaps unacquainted with their husband's people in London or are unfamiliar with the conventional procedure in dispute settlement. Alternatively they or their marriage may be socially unacceptable to the people whose help might be relied upon in other circumstances. Thus a case currently dealt with by one of the Catholic priests concerns an Osu married to a free-born woman. The man appealed to the priest to help him save the marriage. Towns-people merely stand back and observe without comment. In many cases the appeal for help is fruitless because the spouse does not recognise the intervention as legitimate. In others, however, the outcome is more positive. Practical help in the form specifically requested - better accommodation, fostering arrangements for the children - often helps to alleviate a tense situation. In other cases, acknowledgement by the spouse that a problem exists and the discussion of it with a relatively impartial outsider helps to clarify the situation and achieve a solution or avoid a further deterioration in the relationship.

Certain cases, said to be on the increase, go to court and end in legal separation or divorce. Fifteen of the forty cases analysed involved litigation; five more ended in non-legal separation or desertion by one partner. Although

no comparative data is available to support the assertion it seems reasonable to agree with community leaders and others who claim that marital disputes in general and the incidence of court action in particular have risen since the war. The causes of the increase are discernible in the economic and social situation of the post-war community. Irretrievable relationships tend to be those involving severe financial difficulties borne disproportinonately by one partner, an educational disparity between partners resulting in status inequalities, socially isolated partners whose problem is concealed until the couple are past reconciliation, and marriages which were held together in the war by the sense of mutual dependency but subsequently are allowed to disintegrate. Another category includes marriages founded inauspiciously during the war and subsequently . Couples who met and married without any of the traditional formalities may feel under no obligation to their unknown in-laws to perpetuate an unsatisfactory arrangement. Marriages based simply on personal attraction are easily undermined when personal incompatibility comes to light, and no attempt is made by relations to keep the couple together. The consequences of unorthodox procedure in contracting marriages are dealt with in the next chapter. Suffice it to say here that the increase in legal cases is accounted for in large part by such unions. The lack of deference to tradition makes settlement by traditional means inappropriate.

The other categories of relationship mentioned as being beyond the reach of conventional methods of dispute settlement are a product of the war. They consist largely of long-standing marriages, most with children, which have been undermined by prolonged residence in Britain. Incorporation in the occupational structure of the host society and the development of new forms of status differentiation within the community reflecting in part the class system of the wider society, underline disparities which would not be so noticable at home. The comparatively high ranking Nigerian civil servant who comes to Britain and is unable to pass examinations finds that he cannot find a post with equivalent status. Yet he is obliged to stay and undertake work of some sort.

His wife, who may be better educated than he is, feels relatively deprived in consequence. These and other causes of strain have already been dealt with. The point to be noted here is that the gap between aspiration and achievement is not only a cause of dispute but itis more likely to lead to a complete rupture of marital relations than to reconciliation.

Almost invariably, however, in marriages based on customary law (as most long standing marriages are) an attempt is made to settle the dispute by customary means before embarking on litigation the latter course is adopted when all else has failed. Two cases show the typical procedure as well as the likely cause of litigation.

The As knew each other in Nigeria but married in Britain before the war. They have four small children. When they met, Mr. A's career prospects were good. He was half way thorugh a professional course and was likely to qualify in 1968 or there-abouts. Mrs. A was also well-educated, having obtained A Level passes and embarked on a study of taxation. When the war broke out Mr. A abandoned his studies, which he has since been unable to resume. At the time of the investigation he was working in a menial capacity in a local factory, and studying computer analysis part-time. Although he has two houses in the midlands and is prosperous by Ibo standards, his lack of qualifications makes the prospect of going home remote. His lack of intellectual achievement threatens his status. His dependence on other people for advice and help in making decisions which affect the family is humuliating for his wife. She herself earns a comparatively higher salary as a tax officer in the Department of Inland Revenue and is taking additional qualifications in accountancy.

Whenthe conclusion of the war brought no changes in the As' situation their relationship began to deteriorate. Mrs. A became more 'unruly' and Mr. A beat her for it. Relatives tried to settle the matter but were unable to do so. Mrs. A began to make enquiries about her legal rights. Her application for custody of their children in the middle of 1971 was uncontested. She was

awarded maintenance. Legal separation was followed by divorce proceedings and the couple are now living in different parts of the country.

The circumstances of the second case are similar in certain respects. They include a long-standing marriage undermined in later years by growing disparities, a successful wife and unsuccessful husband, and attempts by kin and friends to bring about a reconciliation followed by legal action. The case offers additional insight into the acceptability of the various courses of action, and social attitudes towards those who take them.

Mr. B was a bank manager in Nigeria and came to Britain for the professional qualifications he needed for promotion. He sent for his wife and paid for her education. She achieved a first degree in law, and at the time the marriage broke up in 1970 was preparing for a masters degree. Her brother has also qualified at the husband's expense while Mr. B himself was unable to pass his examinations. He was well-off, with two houses in Britain, but the social and intellectual gulf between him and his wife created a rift which was immediately apparent to visitors (a very unusual situation for even in dispute a couple keep up the appearance of stability). After the birth of their second child in about 1969 Mr. B appealed to both sets of relatives for help. Two meetings were called at their house but because Mrs. B was observed to be 'very disrespectful' the mediators declined to assist further. Mrs. B, as a lawyer, is fully aware of her legal rights and of the sympathetic attitude towards the maligned wife in English law. She obtained a council flat for herself and their children and deserted. Shortly afterwards she issued a writ for divorce, the hearing of which was in progress at the time of fieldwork.

The opinions of townspeople are currently divided on the issue. The elders and younger men tend to side with the husband while the women see Mrs. B's point of view. It is worth considering some of their reactions for the light they throw on expectations of conjugal roles and attitudes towards the settlement of disputes. An elder closely involved in the case as a barrister and a 'traditionalist' is determined to make an example of the wife (a woman from his

own town) to all other local girls who are thinking of going direct to court without calling in relations first. (Mrs. B is in fact currently giving legal advice to another woman in the local community who wishes to leave her husband). "Her action will succeed", he said grimly, "over my dead body!" He has invited the press to attend the hearing to make Mrs. B's humiliation all the greater. Her refusal to consider reconciliation, marked by the drastic notion of initiating divorce proceedings, is in his view a violation of tradition which puts her family to shame. (Her father is reputed to have written condemning her for deserting her husband, an action that "is not in the tradition of the X clan".) The barrister at first advised Mr. B to bring up an incident unconnected with their marital relationship as evidence against Mrs. B. This tactic having failed he is currently advising him to obtain a document from home confirming the payment of a dowry as evidence of a customary marriage, so that the court will have no jurisdiction.

Another elder on the husband's side, feels that, despite allegations of adultery on both sides, Mr. B has right on his side. He came to England a rich man, and trained his wife who should not repay him in this way. This view seems to be general among the older men. The different attitudes of men and women are reflected in the reaction of a husband and wife to the case. The husband maintains that Mrs. B is not satisfied with her good fortune. She is ungrateful and not well brought up. (A well brought up girl accepts her role as it is conventionally defined.[1]) "She is better qualified than he is", retorted his wife sharply, "and that overrules her upbringing. Anyway, she added, "she was well brought up." Another woman, commenting on the activities and intentions of Mr. B's lawyer, claimed that there was nothing anyone like him could do. "These girls have worked everything before they leave," she said sombrely. "We won't any longer put up with the treatment our grandmothers suffered."

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1. V. Uchendu (1965a) p 53 makes this point that a girl's life in traditional Ibo society is essentially a preparation for marriage.

The women's views imply that certain actions are justified in the light of their changing expectations of marriage. There is an expectation of emotional fulfillment in marriage. Gratitude alone is insufficient to keep a couple together. Compatibility - intellectual, emotional, educational - is required in the marital relationship. Hence action which is unlikely to bring a recognition of the fact, such as resort to the elders and kin who have different ideas about marriage, must be avoided in favour of unconventional action with a more satisfactory outcome.

The elders' determination to uphold traditions and punish deviants, in this case Mrs. B and others who might be thinking of following her example, conveys an impression of sexual conflict. The upholders of tradition seem to be predominantly men, while women act unconventionally in furtherance of their interests. While there is evidence that men also are condemned for going to court such cases are rare. In one instance a man who prosecuted his wife for arson was strongly condemned by his townspeople who felt that court action should have been avoided although he had a strong case in law. Equally, traditional procedures are upheld by most women. On the whole, however, litigation in marital disputes is initiated by women rather than men.

The discussion of procedures adopted in marital disputes leads inevitably to a consideration of judgements given; of the content of decisions made. Judgements, like the act of intervention itself, are justified by reference to traditional standards. Wives are expected to defer to their husbands, though in acknowledgement of their substantial financial contribution consultations in major decisions affecting the family is advocated. A husband is not accountable to his wife for his leisure activities but should not hurt her by bringing his girlfriends home, or neglect her because of them. He should make it clear to his girlfriends too that he respects his family. A wife should consult her husband before making large or unusual purchases even though she is using money she has earned.

Above all the emphasis is on reconciliation. Both parties are in the wrong to the extent that they quarrel at all. Such conduct is selfish for it disregards their responsibility to their respective families to live in peace and so preserve the alliance. They are admonished to remember that " they are not the only ones in the family."

The standpoints of the parties in procedure adopted and in judgements made are justified by feference to tradition. Tradition requires the elders to act in loco parentis in the internal settlement of marital disputes. In conformity with tradition their judgement carries a moral imperative on the parties and must be accepted. Judgement leans towards reconciliation at all costs, again in conformity with the supposed permanence of marriages in traditional society. The degree to which this rendering of tradition conforms with the standard which is supposed to represent is open to question.

The women maintain that in the contemporary situation there is no-one with the authority to judge their actions. The traditional definition of roles and status of husband and wife is seen as being inappropriate. Women in the grandparents' generation stayed in a repressive household, for the sake of their children, who were central to their lives and the raison d'etre for their presence in their husband's compound. Women are no longer dependent on their husband and offspring for status, and no sanctions can be applied by their husbands in view of their economic independence. 'Traditional' means, for women, the dependence of wives on their husbands and their kin, and the reasonable excercise of authority by them.

The notion of tradition involving repression and control is thus held by both men and women but different conclusions are drawn from it. In the women's view its standards are no longer appropriate. In the men's view it must be upheld as appropriate and desirable. 'European ways' - freedom of thought and action by women - are wilfully acquired but unnecessary and undesirable.

This view is summed up in the sour comment of one male informant that women's problems are self-inflicted. They do not have have to go to work and endure role conflict. The cost of fostering their children cancels out any financial benefits of so doing. Women go to work because they want to meet other women and gossip about fashion. The idea is entrenched that women's education and their subsequent awareness of legal rights are to blame for marital disharmony. The knowledge acquired by women does not merely facilitate a breach but causes it. Thus instability is attributed to an external factor, while custom remains inviolate.

Several questions emerge from the foregoing discussion. They concern the existence off a basis in tradition for the pattern of involvement and the definition of marriage and conjugal roles implicit in the judgements offered and the reason why certain standards, labelled 'traditional' are upheld so strenuously by certain sections of the community.

The phenomenon of domestic quarrels and marital breakdown is understood in terms of the relationship between role expectations and their strucutral context. In view of the frequent subjective reference to tradition in explaining the incidence of quarrels, the intervention by outsiders and the judgements they offer, it remains to ask what the traditional expectations of marriage really are, and whether they are compatible with contemporary structural circumstances.

Role expectations and structural circumstances. The term 'traditional' is conventionally applied to the society of yam cultivators typical of ancient times. In an ethnic minority its use encompasses all situations encountered in the country of origin. Account must be taken therefore of agricultural developments and concommitant variations in the domestic sphere, and married life in an urban setting in Nigeria.

In the conventional view, Ibo marriage serves a two-fold purpose: to increase the size of the patrilineage, and to strengthen its links with other families. In terms of Leach's set of rights conferred by marriage, it established the legal father of a woman's children and establishes a socially significant relationship of affinity between a man and his wife's brothers. (Rights A and J respectively).[1]

The acquisition of rights over the offspring of a union is secured by the man's family on payment of a conventionally determined sum of money and/or goods and services, the 'dowry', which legalises the marriage.[2] The relationship of affinity involves mutual rights and obligations. The traditional benefits of the marriage alliance are the dowry, mutual assistance and reciprocal hospitality, and financial assistance in the education of younger siblings, in business ventures and in house building. They include also moral and material support in celebration and commiseration, and political allegiance.

The range of interests represented in the marriage alliance has implications for every aspect of the institution. It determines the definition of conjugal roles, criteria in the selection of a partner and procedure in contracting the union, the stability of marriage and the settlement of marital disputes. Not all of these aspects are relevant here. Questions prompted by the forgoing discussion of marital organisation concern individual autonomy and cooperation, authority and status within the nuclear family, and between the couple and their kin, particularly those in the parental generation. Attention is directed towards these characteristics (or lack of them) in women. Of particular interest are

1. E. Leach (1961) p 107-8.

2. The acquisition of rights over children by the brideprice impels a suggestion from Okonjo (1970) that the payment should be termed 'lobolo' or 'childprice'. For this and other definitions of Ibo marriage see Okonjo (1970) p 145-52; Uchendu (1965) p 50-3; C.K. Meek (1950) p 267-8; Leith-Ross (1965) p 96-100.

women's freedom to work and dispose of the product of their labour, to make social contacts outside the marriage, with both men and women, and claim compensation for their husband's adultery; freedom to terminate the union, and in respect of status generally freedom to enjoy full legal rights and attain equivalent social status with men. The inclusion of these issues is founded on the belief that the status of women as wives is determined by their status outside the home, by their possession of legal, economic and social rights as individuals.[1]

Traditionally Ibo women not only have the freedom to work but are expected to make a contribution towards feeding the family.[2] Responsibility for the household is divided. The men provide yams (the main staple) from September to January, and meat and fish at festivals. The women supply root crops between February and September, and salt, oil, peppers and other vegetables throughout the year. Before the introduction of cassava women's contribution was minor, compared with the men's, and their dependence on the men, total. Not only were their crops planted in space allotted by the husband between his rows of yams, but without his yams the family would starve. After the introduction of cassava, cultivated exclusively by the women during the months of February to September, the relationship of dependency was reversed. The main responsibility for feeding the family falls on the wife. Husband and wife farm their crops separately.

Other agricultural products, the main commercial assets, include palm wine, the prerogative of men, and palm oil, which is extracted by the women while profits from its sale are retained by the men. The palm kernels belong to the women. Both sexes trade, each retaining the profit from sales. Women make use of the extensive network of local markets to sell surplus farm crops, together with pots and mats, fish, poultry and eggs, salt and other products.

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1. The distinction between women as wives and women as people is drawn with great clarity by Karen Sacks (1971). Her indices of domestic position and social adulthood respectively have been adopted here in modified form.
2. P. Ottenberg(1959); U. Okonjo (1970); S.Leith-Ross (1965); S. Ardener (1953).

The amount of farming and trade carried out by women depend on the amount of farm land available to her and such individual factors as strength, skill and ambition. Her rights to land are held through her husband, who allots her a portion of his own to farm and she may also rent extra land. Women often accumulate substantial savings. This is facilitated by women's savings groups or contribution clubs.

In the urban areas women's capacity to work is restricted by the availability of suitable occupations. The relationship of dependency in the rural areas before the introduction of cassava is recreated in the towns. In the towns men, while expecting their wives to make a financial contribution to the home, are often obliged to give them regular allowances for food.[1] Most women, however, make some money if possible, in order not to be entirely dependent on their husbands. The most popular occupation is trade. Even the university lecturer and government minister's wives have their 'show glass' of wares, normally expensive fabrics. While the 'front door' or 'house' trader, and the market place trader, use their profit to make the household economically viable, however, the wife of a high income husband trades in order to maintain or enhance a level of social status attained primarily thorugh her husband's occupation.

In the rural area the division of labour in farmwork between husband and wife prompts one observer to define marriage as a business partnership.[2] Husband and wife are business partners in the common enterprise of maintaining the family and maximising its resources. In the urban area the household as an economic unit involving a division of labour and cooperation on the scale observed in the village ceases to exist.[3] The traditional economic role of the wife is disturbed by the unavailability of suitable occupations and the burden

1. Okonjo. It is possible that she exaggerates the dependence of women on men or that her findings for Enugu cannot be generalised to other urban areas in Eastern Nigeria. R.A. Levine (1966) describes the sense of threat felt by Ibo men at the economic activities of their wives. Women's independence challenges male dominance in marital relationships, reflected in the literature of masculine protest turned out by the popular press in Onitsha.
2. Leith-Ross (1965) p 230.
3. Okonjo (1970) p 133-4.

of maintaining the household falls heavily on the man. The wife is entirely dependent on her husband for subsistence.

In the traditional system of production a woman is entitled to save the surplus product of her labour, although she must obtain her husband's permission before selling anything. Women are able to compete for social status and purchase titles and other status symbols. Since the system of title-taking is less entrenched among women their wealth has in later years been used to acquire a new status symbol - education for their children.[1] The institution of woman marriage also testified to the wealth and influence of women.[2] Thus a woman may be highly ranked as an individual because of a distinguished son, success in trading, the possession of a title or position in the women's title society, and the founding of a big compound by 'marrying' women whose offspring are conceived by men she approves of and recognised members of her patrilineage or that of her husband, if she has one.

Women's savings clubs and title societies indicate a freedom to establish social contacts, especially with other women, outside the family. The existence of active and highly organised voluntary associations in both rural and urban environments has been fully documented.[3] Social interaction at the local markets, in meetings of various kinds, is a well-developed feature of women's life in the village. Active groups based on the extended family and village half, on the village and village group, on the possession of titles or other common interests, meet regularly for economic, religious, judicial and convivial activities. Women's groups based on place of birth are the means by which links between villages are strengthened and institutionalised. The men have no equivalent system. In the context of these meetings women are able to offer each other mutual support against men. Concerted action against a defaulting husband is often vigorous and affective. Co-wives, equally, force their common

1. P. Ottenberg (1959); S. Ardener (1953).
2. On woman marriage see Uchendu (1965 a) p 50. Okonjo (1970) p 149.
3. M.M. Green (1964); S.L. Ross (1965); S. Ardener (1953).

husband into submission by the application of economic sanctions and the withdrawal of sexual services.

In the towns, associational life is developed in the form of church fellowships.[1]

The freedom to associate with members of the opposite sex also exists, though it is less in evidence. While men and women normally spend their leisure time apart, evidence marshalled by Uchendu suggests that the institution of concubinage is highly developed in at least one Ibo clan. The equal right of women to sexual relationships is recognised among the Ngwa people of Southern Iboland.[2] The freedom of Ngwa women and others in Owerri and Awka to have sexual relationships outside marriage is consistent with their high economic status, freedom to marry wives, acquire land and property and play leadership roles. The system of concubinage reflects the fact that marriage, signified by the payment of bridewealth, transfers in full only the right to the potential fertility of the woman.[3] All other rights - sexual, economic and domestic - can be shared or loaned. While sexual services are theoretically the monopoly of her husband, a woman can, in certain situations and with the permission of her husband, contract a socially approved sexual relationship with another man. The contract is sealed with simple rites.

Concubinage among the Ngwa reflects the nature of marriage and family relationships among the Ibo. "The Igbo lay more emphasis on the father-child relationship than the husband-wife relationship or any other relationship in the kinship syndrome. The sexual services in the 'family' are channelled towards a most important social goal: the perpetuation of the male line. There is no emphasis among the Igbo on sexual services being <u>exclusive</u> and confined to husband and wife. All that the culture demands is that sex be institutionalised."[4]

1. S.L. Ross describes these in Port Harcourt. Okonjo makes a mention of them for Enugu.
2. Uchendu (1965 b).
3. Ibid p 189.
4. Ibid p 193-4.

The institution of concubinage solves some of the problems created by woman marriage, child marriage and early widowhood, long post-partum taboo, a woman's dependence on male offspring for security, the economic burdens of bride-wealth, and the relative equality between the sexes. In respect of the latter Uchendu points out that "when opportunities for status advancement are almost equally open to men and women and the socio-economic status of the sexes is approaching near equality, it is difficult, if not impossible, to maintain a double standard of morality." Freedom in heterosexual relationships is not judged anymore harshly in women than in men, provided it occurs within the accepted institutional framework. (Prostitution is distinguished from concubinage in concept and practice, and is socially unacceptable.) Concubinage promotes further the equality between the sexes which Uchendu is not alone in noting.

Adultery bymen is not, however, sufficient grounds for divorce in traditional society, while it may be the reason why a wife is sent home to her people by an irate husband. Adultery compensation is available to women only in the form of social sanctions - ridicule, parsonal abuse - applied by a women's group against an offending husband. Whether or not adultery is used to produre separation or divorce is discretionary. A husband may condone the extramarital relationship of a young wife if he has no male descendants, or is unable to satisfy her.

The ability to terminate a union made under customary law is in theory equal.[1] Either party may initiate an action for separation or divorce and wives more frequently do so than husbands.[2] As a private contract between two families a marriage can be revoked at will by either of the parties. The marriage contract under customary law is dissolved when the full brideprice, or part of it, depending on local custom, is refunded to the man and his family in the presence of witnesses to the original contract. There are several grounds for dissolution, the most general being a failure of obligations on either side.

1. Uchendu (1965) p 87; Okonjo(1970) p 151-2; Wieschoff (1941).
2. S.L. Ross (1965) p 103.

Since these are open to interpretation, the range of causes of divorce is wide. Incompatibility of the partners is sufficient cause of breakdown but the precipitating factor may be a wife's laziness, extravagance, loose character, incurring of bad debts, bad cooking, barrenness, adultery, witchcraft, incompatibility with the relatives of her husband, or persistent, flagrant disobedience of him.[1] Causes against a husband include cruelty, desertion, failure to support, failure to complete the marriage fee, drunkenness, meanness, arrogance or indifference towards her family, and impotence. A woman may abandon her husband without public condemnation if he a thief or becomes Osu.

Although women are free to leave their husbands and may initiate divorce proceedings in theory, in practice a woman's capacity to terminate a marriage is constrained by economic factors. The union, contracted between two groups of kin, is sustained by them in times of crisis. Pressure is brought to bear to keep them together for a variety of reasons. From the standpoint of the wife's kin, the bridewealth may be difficult to refund. Neither family wishes to forgo the benefits of the alliance - mutual aid, political allegiance, and so on. A husband can more easily obtain a divorce, for if he is willing to forgo the return of the brideprice he can just send his wife away. A wife may not be able to break off relations so easily, even if she had good reason to do so, if her family refuses to return it. She is generally expected to make the best of her marriage. If she simply walks out she exposes her family financially (the brideprice must be returned). If she is sent away, a shameful event, they lose prestige. So they tend to discourage divorce.[1] If a wife takes the initiative in divorce she must have good prospects of marrying again so that the brideprice may be returned to her original husband. Poor, old or unattractive

1. Wieschoff (1941.) p 301. Although this material is outdated it has not been succeeded by any other account of equal depth and detail. More recent studies by Okonjo and others do not discuss marriage or divorce by ordinance as does Wieschoff and their descriptions of customary marriage does not contradict his. Since the system he discusses were current during the youth of the Ibos in London and since marriage by ordinance probably remains largely unaltered it is reasonable to use it as a basis for discussion. For verbatim transcripts of many cases for separation and divorce heard by the Resident Colonial Officer 30 years earlier see P.H. Talbot (1932). His data, collected in Port Harcourt, give details of forced marriages, dowry payments etc.

women are therefore at a disadvantage and are obliged to stay married. Women who have made money themselves are in a position to pay back the brideprice whether or not their families approve. They do not depend on their sons for economic security and status and are not, therefore, obliged to remain in their husband's compound in order to be with their sons and inherit through them.

The Nigerian Marriage Ordinance, introduced by the Colonial Administration, added European forms of legalisation to customary marriage and divorce laws. A marriage license is obtained on payment of a fee in the presence of witnesses, after the customary arrangement and payment of brideprice. Certain legal obligations in the new arrangement protect the interests of the wife. She is entitled to inherit and in principle to share in her husband's possessions. If the marriage breaks down she may be awarded alimony and custody of the children. In practice, however, the legal position of women confers no real advantages. Legal divorce is too expensive, especially for women, to undertake. The couple simply separate. The husband avoids his obligations by simply writing a will to disinherit his wife. Any children born to her subsequently, as well as those of the marriage, belong to him. Even if a case is heard, the grounds e.g. barrenness, may not be sufficient in European law for divorce action. A separated woman married by Ordinance cannot remarry. To do so by Ordinance would be illegal; to do so by customary law would also be impossible for a brideprice was paid by the first husband. A new husband might repay the brideprice but legally their children belong to the first husband whose marriage by Ordinance has not been dissolved.

Men, on the other hand, can take additional wives by customary law. A woman who obtains a divorce cannot even then remarry easily, for the churches in Nigeria disapprove of divorce. Thus women married by Ordinance whose marriage breaks down are on their own. Both separated and divorced women tended to become prostitutes at the time of Weischoff's analysis.

Legal marriages, like customary law marriages, thus end in permanent separation rather than divorce. The concept of legal divorce is, writes Wieschoff, meaningless to most Ibos. Separation is the only form of breakdown and is final. The emphasis is on reconciliation, and action is taken by the kin groups to ensure the continuance of the marriage. Wives appeal to their husband's kin who are accountable for his actions and husbands appeal to their parents in law. The decisions of kin carry weight and can overrule the wishes of their son or daughter. Thus a man's family may in his absence (or in his presence) send his wife away if she is no longer acceptable to them. Similarly a girl's parents may insist that she returns to her husband's home by refusing to take her in.

The good daughter-in-law is one who is healthy, hence capable of bearing children, and industrious, so that she can make a viable contribution to the life and resources of the compound. Her authority within it increases with age and the birth of children. Although the extended family has considerable influence over the affairs of the couple, some consultation goes on between them, and a wife plays a part in the organisation of their domestic affairs. While the image of the dutiful and obedient wife is held up as ideal, and the notion of seemliness requires less vocal participation on public occasions, the role of women in economic and family life is very important. Leith-Ross observes that the process of discussion and consultation between husband and wife normally goes on, though the wife's opinions are less significant when both the man's parents are alive. In time, however, a woman achieves the position of influence possessed by her mother-in-law and has some control over additions to the household in the choice of her sons' wives.

In traditional society, the position of women and their authority and status both inside the home and outside it varies between the rural and urban contexts. In the rural context, particularly after the introduction of cassava which altered the socio-economic relationship between men and women, the latter enjoy a considerable measure of economic independence and possess high status. Their organisations have strength and vitality. As individuals they are commanding

personalities. While the roles of wife and mother are the main ambition of every woman they have an existence of their own, lived quite apart from husband and children.[1]

The division into men's things and women's things appears to be general throughout Ibo social life in the village and is the sexual counterpart of the principle of dual organisation elaborated by M.M. Green. Not only are economic activities strictly demarcated, with women controlling much of the food supply, producing certain crops and dominating petty trade and various crafts. Through their associations they manage their own disputes and provide mutual aid. Men and women are believed to be separate entities. Girls as well as boys are expected and encouraged to express themselves. A husband respects his wife's desire to be herself and may actively encourage her to use her gifts of initiative, industry, shrewdness and alertness by setting her up in trade.

In the magical sphere too men and women are sharply differentiated. There is a generally held belief in the physico-magical property of woman arising from the phenomenon of menstrual blood. Alhtough magic is the prerogative of men, their medicines have a female antidote. Male medicines, which are hot, are neutralised by a female cooler. In war, men fight and women make peace.[2] Heat is associated with anger, and the female principle is cooking and pacifying.

The separation of spheres and the high social status of women are both missing in the urban environment. In the town women make a less significant financial contribution to the home. Their income, furthermore, is not used to enhance their own status or promote their private interests but to make the household a viable economic unit or increase its prestige, derived mainly from the occupational status of the husband. The relative poverty of associational life in

1. F. Nwapa's novel 'Efuru' (1966) conveys the possession of social adulthood by women in traditional society. The central character possesses vigour and qualities of leadership. For a critical discussion of the novel see P. Nandakumar (1971) p 136-146. The 'private' and 'independent' aspect of women's lives struck Leith-Ross most when she observed a group of women eating a sacramental meal together.

2. M.J.E.Ekandem (1955) in an article on plant symbolism, describes the practice in some areas of declaring a truce by the exchange of young palm leaves in the middle of the battlefield by a young virgin from either side.

the city indicates a position of relative social isolation in women. It might be suggested that when the spheres of men and women are no longer separate, women's position changes from one of relative equality to one of subordination.[1]

The new tradition of dependence and identification acquired in an urban environment contrasts with the rural tradition. The decrease in authority in the home, in concerted action by women and in social interaction among them in Enugu provides a contrast with the economic independence, high social and domestic status, the vigour and vitality of women's organisations in the village. These two separate traditions act in conjunction on Ibo expectations in London.

Both Ibo men and women in London take the view that a wife's place is in the home. She should not have to work to help keep the family and only does so as an expedient to meet the losses of the war and enable her husband to finish his studies. This notion is derived from the tradition of elite households in the towns rather than the older tradition of married life in the village. In the latter situation the wife seems to have spent much of her time away from home in economic, social and kinship activities; at the market, in meetings and participating in religious festivals associated with her natal village. The contemporary view of tradition emphasises the subordination of women in the household while ignoring balancing factors in their social position. Thus it is recalled that trade was conducted only with the husband's permission, but not that the wife was entitled to keep the profits of sale as her own to dispose of as she liked. It is recalled that husbands gave their wives permission to attend meetings and be away from home. But it is claimed, unjustifiably, that

1. Okonjo's evidence of growing inequality provides an interesting contrast to observations by other writers of the improvement in women's position attendant upon urbanisation and economic development. See T. Baker and M. Bird(1959); R.A. Levine (1966); D.F.McCall(1961). All deal with West African women. However, the conclusion that Ibo women's position has if anything deteriorated is consistent with K. Sack's deduction that the status of women is lower in a Class society than a preclass society. The crucial factor is the changing method of production which in a class society becomes private rather than public. Women's production is for the benefit of the family rather than the community as a whole. Her sphere of influence and status are accordingly diminished.

authority over a wife's choice of friends and associates is also traditional. The traditional separation of the spheres is used to justify men's freedom of action and lack of accountability, ignoring the fact that women too had their won interests which were not under constant scrutiny and precluded a feeling of exclusion from the men's world. Consistent with the tradition of polygamy men's sexual exploits outside marriage are condoned, while liaisons by women are condemned, despite the institution of concubinage which existed to preserve the balance. The traditional emphasis on reconciliation between quarreling spouses and the authority of older kin over a couple who wished to separate are upheld without regard to the economic factor. Unsatisfactory marriages continued because neither the wife nor her kin had the means to return the brideprice or dispense with the economic services involved in the marriage contract. Where the means were available, unions were terminated. The economic independence of women in the present situation does not alter the general recollection of stability and continuity at all costs.

The general expectations of obedience, docility and subordination, particularly in the financial sphere, suggest selective recall and are inconsistent with such traditional features as the influence of women acting individually in the household and together outside it to promote their interests. They are also in conflict with contemporary structural circumstances: the economic position of women after the war, the absence of support from a closeknit network of kin and friends, the social and physical isolation of the couple and particularly the wife. These factors impose new demands on the marital relationship. They call for jointness in decision-making, in household tasks, in financial matters and in leisure activities.

Shared leisure is imposed by circumstances rather than sought or welcomed. It is often unwelcome and unappreciated, for the couple have little in common and were not selected as marriage partners on the basis of personal compatibility.

In psychological terms the absence of need complementarity becomes a weakness in the marriage when the nuclear family is structurally unsupported and the couple are forced to rely on each other for emotional fulfillment.[1]

In the circumstances it may be asked why there are not more cases of marital instability. Consensus is sometimes maintained by the definition of one party as mentally sick, Such was the case quoted earlier where a wife's confusion over her husband's behaviour resulted in personal disorientation and 'mental sickness.' In another a wife came home at 2 am. and despite persistent questioning refused to say where she had been. She left home and told an Ibo friend that "friends advised her she would be better living on her own than being married." She was reported missing and when traced by the police made a statement to the effect that she was happy where she was, did not want to return to her husband, and did not want him to know where she was. There had apparently been no previous quarrels and the husband thinks she must be mentally sick. Seen from her point of view, however, it might be suggested that she acted rationally in a situation which had become intolerable but which in conformity with expectations she had accepted uncomplainingly hitherto. Living alone was preferable to marriage, with its attendant economic responsibilities and social isolation, unrecognised in the husband's attitude and behaviour which reflected customary expectations of conjugal roles.

The theme of mental illness runs through several cases of wives in apparently stable marital situations sent home by their husbands. Instability induced by role conflict and conflicting expectations is masked by the supposed sickness of one partner. Consensus is maintained by the denial of legitimate grievance. More often, however, it is maintained by the acceptance of their roles by most women, regardless of the inconsistencies in their position. A female informant who objected to the conventional passivity and subordination of wives and women.

1. For an exposition of this idea see R.F. Winch (1971) p 212. In the absence of the extended family the roles of husband and wife are less clearly defined more flexible and joint. More importance is attached to the idiosyncratic needs of the individual.

attributed its persistence to the collusion between men and the majority of women. They condemn deviants as 'Anglicised', 'badly brought up', 'badly behaved' and so on. By labelling deviants as bad or mad, formal stability is maintained within a conservative framework acceptable to the majority of men and women.[1]

Conclusion. Despite the general consensus of values with regard to marital organisation, as evidenced in the widespread agreement about appropriate behaviour between husband and wife in the various spheres of activity and about the procedure to adopt in case of dispute, several facts call for an explanation. The consensus itself is problematic in view of the disjunction between the traditional expectation of wifely subordination and docility, and the crucial economic role of women. The conflict of interest is drawn most sharply between the few, mostly women, who see their interests as being best served by taking unconventional action to end a marriage and the majority, notably the elders, who continue to regard such courses of action as being unacceptable. It becomes important to know why the senior members of the community uphold the conventional procedures of dispute settlement so strenously and why they invoke tradition to explain and justify their actions. The evidence points to conclusions concerning the nature of the group and the distribution of authority within it.

An obvious implication of the concern shown by Mr. B's lawyer and other elders that reconciliation through traditional channels should be attempted before litigation is that unconventional procedures threaten their authority. A strong criticism of Mrs. B was not that she desired separation but that she went direct to court without calling in senior members of the community first. It was for this that Mr. B's lawyer was determined to punish her. The influence and authority of senior members of the community is sustained and reinforced by their excercise of rights and obligations in respect of marriage which are held by parents and kin at home. The acknowledgement that elders in London have the right and

1. The pattern is reminiscent of family relationships analysed by R.D. Laing (1970). Growing children, especially adolescent girls, who do not readily fit into the mould their parents have shaped for them are categorised as disobedient then mentally sick, diagnosed as schizophrenic and hospitalised.

responsibility of approving new marriages and condoning separation expresses and sustains their influence as individuals and the authority of elders as a group. Their insistence on using the 'proper' channels, namely themselves, to solve a dispute brings to mind an analogous situation revealed by M. Douglas. She conceptualises the control of Lele elders over the right of marriage as a rationing system.[1] Coupons - the raffia cloth goods required for the marriage payment - are issued by the elders to those of the young men who meet their requirements. Since the coupons return to the hands of the senior old men at each transfer the elders are the sole issuing authority. Their power is sustained only so long as the commodity which is sought - wives - and the means of obtaining them - bridewealth paid in raffia cloth - is in short supply, and rationed. If there are alternative routes, if raffia mats become devalued or all goods become obtainable for a common unit of exchange - an all-purpose currency - the power of the licensing authority is undermined. (Lele economy consists of ranked spheres of exchange. Rights in women and raffia cloth belong to the highest sphere.)

The Ibo elders, similarly, safeguard their traditional right to issue licenses to separate. Alternative routes which do not acknowledge their authority, such as recourse to law, are strenously opposed. The disregard shown by people like Mrs. B threatens to undermine their influence in marital affairs in particular and in the affairs of the community in general; for the right to issue licenses is correlated with social status. Hence "the struggle of those in privileged positions to keep control of the issue desk."[2]

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1. M. Douglas (1970) p 131. She applies the same notion to Tiv marriages, p 137-8.

2. M. Douglas (1970) p 138. This brief discussion of her hypothesis grossly oversimplifies her argument which relates to societies characterised by multiple spheres of exchange. The rationing system is applied to goods in the highest sphere which are controlled by those with highest status, the elders. The elders have the most wives and brass rods (Tiv) or raffia cloth (Lele). The interpenetration of spheres brought by the introduction of an all-purpose currency thus undermines the status system and it is for this reason that encroachments on the right of the elders to issue coupons are resisted.

Thus the pattern of dispute settlement has implications for the authority structure of the group, which is a dimension of its distinctiveness in the wider society.[1] In a more general way the standards adopted and the procedure followed affect the existence of the group as a distinct social unit. Distinctiveness is maintained by norms and values expressed in patterns of interaction and role behaviour which are exclusive to the group. It is maintained also by minimising contact with outsiders.

In respect of the former, the process of consultation with kin, the process of appeal to the family of the spouse, and the orderly confrontation of two sides leading ideally to reconciliation, are culturally prescribed. They are a major feature of cultural differentiation by which the group is distinguishable from non-Ibos. The values and expectations of conjugal roles expressed in the advice and judgements given in disputes serve to differentiate between members of the group and non-members. Differences between the Ibos and their English neighbours are exaggerated. Unfavourable comparisons are drawn to present the Ibo way of life in respect of marital organisation as wholly good and desirable and the English counterpart as entirely negative.

Contact with outsiders in the course of dispute settlement tends to dilute the culture of the group. Control is necessary over individuals who seek outside assistance and hence threaten to undermine the group's identity by the application of new standards and the introduction of new values. Sanctions are applied with particular vigour against non-conformists who are likely to encourage others to follow their example, as did Mrs. B. When the offenders are women action against deviants is even more important. Control over women, through whom the group is perpetuated, is essential in order to retain a separate identity.

To abstain from involvement in dispute settlement is therefore to risk losing the group's separate identity in two ways: first, by allowing unconventional behaviour which introduces heterogeneous standards and values; and secondly by giving women, through whom the group recruits new members (the next generation)

1. A. Cohen (1969a) The maintenance of an authority system is one of the problems which must be solved by an ethnic minority.

freedom to redefine their situation. Abstention affects the distinctiveness of the group by undermining the group's authority structure. Involvement in the personal affairs of married couples is legitimised by a definition of marriage as a matter for common concern, and its stability as being in the collective interest. Authority, manifested in dispute settlement, is traditionally vested in the senior members of the group, hence claimed by the older members of the London community. Their abstention involves not only a loss of personal authority but of general prestige within a group which traditionally respects seniority.

Unconventional behaviour by men is equally unacceptable, though it occurs less frequently in respect of conjugal roles and dispute settlement. (The opposite is true in disputes of a more general nature, eg. landlord-tenant disputes). Women oppose court action by men, for their security is bound up with the existence of the group as a separate entity. Given the customary definition of women's roles, which emphasises married status and male dominance, their security requires the homogeneity of the group. Thus women who accept the conventional definition of their situation (the majority) have as much interest in perpetuating the status quo as the senior men (and younger men who anticipate filling their role in future.)[1]

Hence the strenuous efforts to restrict matrimonial affairs to within the group, and the withdrawal of approval from individuals who seek to oppose them. Hence also the attempt, by marshalling evidence selected according to English legal criteria, to discredit a wife who has brought an action for divorce.

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1. The circularity involved in this form of justification reflects the fact that all values in a belief system tend to be mutually reinforcing, hence self-validating. Women's security depends on the homogeneity of the group given the way in which the group defines women's roles and security. In a closed system which recognises no alternatives, beliefs hang together: to give up one would require surrendering the others. See R. Horton (1970) p 349-352 on problems of reasoning in closed and open systems.

The need to retain the distinctiveness of the group which involves control of the activities of its women in particular, explains the inconsistencies between 'tradition' as it is upheld in London and arrangements in traditional Ibo society. The standards selected for application in London are those which directly or indirectly serve the purpose of strengthening the boundaries between the Ibos and outsiders. They are labelled 'traditional' to take advantage of the moral imperatives involved in membership of the home community. In an ethnic minority traditional symbols are a convenient and effective form of legitimation. In this case they support and are supported by the kinship ideology whose effectiveness has already been demonstrated.

CHAPTER SIX

Post-War Period, Part IV. The Pattern of new Marriages.

Introduction. It has been seen that clear prescriptions for marital conduct constrain the action of married couples. The autonomy of the group is upheld by the denial of autonomy to individuals; by the involvement of its members in each other's domestic affairs. Popular concern for the wellbeing of individual households and the success of marriages is justified by reference to custom. By reinforcing group norms and underlining the principle of seniority the pattern of dispute settlement promotes boundary maintenance.

Involvement in personal affairs is not confined to the domestic activities of married couples. The affairs of single people, too, are the object of attention. Kin, elders and other townspeople play a role in marital choice and the process of contracting the union. The extent of their influence is a subject of investigation in this chapter. Taking up the point made in the last, their role in the creation of new marriages is examined for its effect on the persistence of the community as a separate entity.

Like married couples, single people are subject to both physical and normative constraints in their relationships with members of the opposite sex. Physical constraints include geographical mobility which has removed them from the influence of kin in Nigeria; incorporation in the economic life of the host society and involvement in its educational institutions; spatial segregation in living arrangements and the social isolation attendant upon it; and demographic imbalances which are conducive to involvement with women outside the group. Normative pressures exist in the form of prescriptions issued by senior members of the community and other informal pressures applied by townspeople and Ibo peers, confirming the values transmitted from the country of origin in the process of migration. Added to these are the normative influences of the host society, to which young people are exposed in the course of work and study and in daily interaction with non-Ibos. These sets of prescriptions

often run counter to each other. The dilemma of single people faced with a choice between alternative courses of action reflects the uniqueness of their present circumstances. The economic and phychological independence acquired during the war, added to the change produced by living abroad and out of the sphere of influence of kin, is in conflict with the post-war restoration of pressure from home. The renewal of obligations to kin is based on a pre-war system of authority which seems outmoded in the altered circumstances of the post-war period.

How the dilemma is resolved is a major concern of this chapter. Attention remains focussed on the institution which is the ultimate objective of most heterosexual relationships between single Ibo men and women in London, and the climax achieved in many of them: marriage.

Weddings occur with great frequency, especially in the summer months. As many as eight have been known to take place on a single Saturday in mid-summer, hence the widespread impression that " everyone is getting married". Weddings are the dominant large-scale social activity in the community. Several weddings held on the same day, attracting an average of 150 guests each, account for a considerable proportion of the adult Ibo population in London. "Where is the wedding today?" is the query of young men who make a habit of attending them, in search of free drinks and entertainment in the company of fellow Ibos. No invitation is required for the conventional wedding reception although it is normal to issue one to guests whose presence is specifically required.

The procedure in contracting new marriages follows a standard pattern from which few deviate. The tradition of London Ibo weddings reflects a variety of influences arising from the home community, its senior representatives in London, and the social environment of the host society. Attention may be focussed on the two key areas of selection and legislation:- the pattern of consultation in the choice of a partner and the procedure adopted in contracting the union. At the risk of repeating points made earlier these issues are dealt with over time, in order to bring out the distinctiveness of the present period.

Selection and legalisation. Ibos meet their future spouses in a variety of ways. Some are introduced by their families with a view to marriage. A variation of this is what is known as child marriage, in which the girl is very young at the time of the engagement. A third type is popularly referred to as 'proxy marriage', or 'marrying by post'. The 'posted wife' and husband do not in fact meet at all until the marriage, in customary law at least, is a fait accompli. The fourth type, which is the most frequent and also the most desired is the independent meeting. The distribution between the four types is shown in Table 6.1.

TABLE 6.1 . Style of meeting and year of marriage of Ibo couples in London. (Source: Marriage Sample.)

YEAR	Introduced		Child Mar.		Proxy		Independent		D.K.		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<1959	-	-	2	24	-	-	3	38	3	38	8	100
1951-9	3	6	6	11	-	-	16	30	28	53	53	100
1960-5	5	4	4	3	2	2	68	59	37	32	116	100
1966-9	2	2	3	3	3	3	76	82	9	10	93	100
1970-2	2	3	1	2	10	18	40	73	2	4	55	100
D.K.	-	-	1	12	-	-	5	63	2	25	8	100
TOTAL	12	4	17	5	15	4	208	63	81	24	333	100

The horizontal percentages show that in the London population the percentage of meetings by introduction has been shrinking steadily over the years, as has that of child marriages. Proxy arrangements on the other hand are a comparatively recent phenomenon, most occurring after the Nigeria-Biafra war. The proportion of independent meetings has grown correspondingly over the years, from 38% of pre-1950 marriages to 82% between 1966-9.

Against this it must be said that information is lacking for a considerable number of cases - 25% (81) of the total. A further limitation of these figures is the lack of control for the influence of different variables. If there had been as many marriages for 1951-9 as for 1966-9 instead of 53 and 93 respectively, arranged meetings might appear to be as infrequent in the 1940s and 1950s as they are today.

Some people say that their own parents met each other independently and that this has always been the norm. However, it is commonly believed that the trend indicated in the table is a real one: that until recently parents and relations frequently arranged the first meeting between potential spouses and that child marriage was widely practiced. It is thought that since about 1960 relations have had less influence on the initial stage of the relationship and that mutual attraction exists between the couples before their families become involved.

The category of 'introduced', which with 4% (12) of the whole is the least common of the four types, may be underrepresented in the table, since it is said to be a common occurrence among wealthy families and for first born sons, both of which are well-represented in the London population.[1,2]

Introductions occur when relations express their concern for their 'son' in his search for a suitable wife by introducing him to the 'right' person. The typical procedure is illustrated by the case of Mary, who married in Nigeria in 1959. This case introduces other issues such as the criteria for mate selection, and the arrangement of the wedding. For the moment, however, it may be considered as an example of an introduction by parents for the purpose of marriage.

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1. Anumonye (1970) found in his sample of Nigerian Medical students in Edinburgh that 56% were first born, 33% intermediate and 13% last born. p61. This confirms the impression of London students though the precise proportions are not known.

2. A correlation between status and style of meeting in the London population in fact indicates the opposite: that high status children meet independently and low status children are more likely to meet by arrangement. There are several possible explanations for this: that the individuals with humble backgrounds are all first sons sent abroad by their own efforts and the combined efforts of their kin; that individuals from wealthy families are second or subsequent in a line of brothers who have received their education abroad; that such people have grown up in the city with a socially heterogeneous circle of acquaintances including the future spouse, met 'independently'; or simply that the numbers are too small and that there are too many uncontrolled variables. In fact, all the suggested explanations contain an element of truth.

Mary had been to a teacher-training college and was successful at her profession. She was ambitious but 'career-women' were unheard of and she succumbed to pressure from her uncles and aunts, and finally from her parents, to marry. Many suitors came but she refused them all, for they were mostly illiterate or Roman Catholic. Retired professional men wanted her for their sons, for she was domesticated, well-educated and had other desireable qualities. Mary wanted to please her parents and to please herself at the same time, by choosing a man they approved of.

While she was on leave and staying in the village (her father had retired there several years before) her parents were involved in a local land dispute and Mary cycled to attend the court hearing. Her father was sitting with Nwafor, a friend from the neighbouring town, a retired accountant, fellow Anglican and 'elite' (literate) who was on the lookout for a wife for his first son (a father has a duty to 'marry a wife' for his first born son). He immediately took a fancy to Mary and said that she should be his wife and build up his obi (compound). Mary did not take him seriously and thought no more about it.

The night before she was due to return to Lagos for work, Mary remembers seeing Nwafor come with his people in a white car. There were long urgent discussions until the small hours, then Mary's mother came into her room. She said that Mary really must marry Nwafor's son, because it was what her parents wanted. Mary had no objections but pointed out with some amusement that she could not marry him without knowing him. Her mother immediately postponed the journey to Lagos and Mary agreed to go to Kano, in Northern Nigeria, to meet Nwafor junior who was working as an accountant there. Fortunately, says Mary, they fell in love at once. After spending a week in Kano she returned to her job in Lagos and the couple corresponded frequently. Five or six months later when all the arrangements had been made, they got married.

Other cases show slight variations in procedure, Sometimes a photograph is requested before the girl agrees to meet the young man. The initial suggestion may be made by an aunt, an older married sister or close friend. It seems that the female members of the family are more active in the role of match-maker than the men.

It is difficult to draw a clear distinction between introductions and child marriages, since in the former the girl may be little more than a child when the couple are introduced. In child marriage, too, at least one of the parties is introduced by their kin. The problem of definition is compounded by one of detection. The account of their early relationship given by the actors in the situation may obscure the fact of the girl's extreme immaturity, for the reason that social approval has been withdrawn from arrangements of this kind.[1]

In one case a man now in his mid-forties and his wife, in her early thirties, described their marriage in this way:" We met while my wife was still at school and I was working. I wanted to marry her and told my father, who approached her father. I worked hard to save up for a dowry and in a few years we got married." A close friend of the couple gave a slightly different version. At a public gathering at which the couple were officiating, she said, with an air of confiding a dark secret, "their's is an interesting case: an arranged marriage. He saw her at school when she was a child and he an adult. He knew her family, a very big (wealthy) one, and decided to marry her when she grew up. She was preserved for him, and grew up knowing it. She was mbe -'secured for him.'"

Child marriage, which accounts for 5% (17) of the total, is defined to include those cases in which the girl is under 14 and the man an adult who arranges with her parents to marry her when she grows up. He contributes towards the cost of her education and maintenance and she stays periodically with her future mother-in-law to get to know her. By the time she is physically mature and her education completed the customary arrangements have been made and the couple are virtually man and wife.

The third of meeting is also characterised by an element of arrangement, or involvement of kin. 'Proxy'marriages (4% - 15) are a phenomenon of recent origin and are explained by residence abroad and more particularly by the

1. Child marriage was legally abolished in Eastern Nigeria in 1956.

Nigeria-Biafra War.[1] They consist of those cases in which a young man in Britain has a wife sent to him who is relatively or absolutely unknown. They are married by proxy in the sense that his closest male equivalent, a brother or first cousin, selects the wife for him and takes his place in the negotiations for the marriage and ceremonies which mark its completion. Sometimes the man has known the girl remotely as a child before he left home. More often she personally is a complete stranger though her family is known to him.

Proxy marriages concern men who, for various reasons, wish to marry an Ibo girl from their own locality and are unable to find one in London, Although most people regard it as desirable to go home and choose a wife rather than have one sent (for "such a marriage is built on doubts") not everyone is in the financial position to do so. Yet the need to marry is pressing, and if a man is to make the right choice and marry properly, in customary terms, his only solution is to rely on his family's judgement.

The young man's reliance on his family's choice, and the mutual acceptability of the individuals on the basis of their family backgrounds, reputation, photographs and correspondence, are issues of great importance. The criteria for marital selection and the basis of mutual acceptability are not discussed here. Proxy marriages are described here as a particular type of meeting, or rather of not meeting, since the first time the couple see each other is probably at London airport, by which time they are man and wife in customary law.

> Paul was lonely and hard up, and wrote to his senior brother at home to find him a wife,as a solution to his emotional and financial problems. Shortly afterwards the brother wrote back: "We have found a good girl for you. She is very beautiful. She comes from X village. Her father's name is A, her mother is B." This was largely what Paul needed to know, for a girl from a certain type of family is expected to behave in a particular way.

1. Okonjo (1970) p 153-5. Men 'abroad' in Enugu marry in this way. According to Uchendu (1965a) p 51, "marriage by photograph" started during World War II under the "send me a wife" programme initiated by Ibo soldiers serving in Nigeria and overseas.

Paul's family, for their part, knew their son, and his character, and hence the sort of woman he could live with. Anyway, says Paul, they wanted someone "they could all marry". Next, photographs were sent, both full length and facial. The couple began to correspond, The letters became erratic, and Paul gathered that something was wrong. He decided that the girl had annoyed his brother in some way, and she wrote hinting at something of the kind, asking him to intercede. Paul replied that it was none of his business and there was nothing he could do. Since his brother was arranging the marriage she must sort it out with him.

The difficulty seemed to have been surpassed, for the customary negotiations were completed and the girl married also by ordinance with Paul's brother acting in his place. She arrived at London airport as his wife, bearing a document testifying to that fact. (When a woman comes without this documentary evidence she enters as a fiancee and must be married within three months by English law in order to comply with immigration regulations.) Paul met her at the airport with some friends and townspeople. Six months later, at his wife's insistence, they had an elaborate church wedding and reception, organised by his townspeople.

The fourth and last style of meeting does not involve the respective families until mutual attraction exists between the couple. Independent meetings account for 62% (208) of the total.

Opportunities for boys and girls to meet each other independently have, it seems, always existed in Iboland, although they have become more numerous in recent years. The spread of communications, the development of secondary boarding school education, and the movement of workers and traders to the towns has led to an expanding scale of interaction. Young people spend considerable periods away from home, at school, at work, or on holiday with relations 'abroad'. Many couples describe how they met while taking part in plays and debates at school, in annual festivals in their hometown, or on visits to relations in the city. A period of correspondence ensues with occasional meetings. On the pretext of visiting the brother or sister the couple may see each other at home, but the true purpose of the visit has to be concealed since it would meet with strong disapproval from parents.

Occasions for meeting in London are more numerous. Most of the 124 (37%) couples who met and married in Britain became acquainted through mutual friends at weddings, parties and dances, at meetings of the local union or national organisations (the latter during the war), in the course of study or on visits to relations in the provinces.

When style of meeting is correlated with the variables of age, distance of hometowns, level of education and social status, the outcome is fairly predictable. Independent meetings occur more between men and women of the same age than different age groups. Couples in the latter category are more likely to have been introduced to each other. (50% of couples with widely differing ages met by arrangement). Couples whose home towns are far apart are likely to have met independently rather than by arrangement for their kin are unlikely to be acquainted. Almost all couples whose homes are 20 miles or more apart met independently. Highly educated people, again, show a tendency for finding their own partners, though this may be explained by the age factor. Men who are older than average when they marry generally meet independently. Such men include a disproportionate number of the highly educated.

TABLE 6.2 .Style of meeting by husband's level of education at Engagement. (Source: Marriage Sample.)

Education	Families involved in choice		Independent choice		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Higher education. (degree, profess. training)	6	12	44	88	50	100
A Levels, Tech. qualifications	12	14	86	86	98	100
O Levels	22	25	65	75	87	100
Primary School Standard VI	3	30	7	70	10	100
TOTAL	43	18	202	82	245	100

Freedom to meet does not, of course, necessarily mean freedom of choice in marriage. Having established that the majoirty of Ibos in London met their future spouses independently the next question for consideration is who must be consulted before the marriage takes place. For a minority the answer is "no-one". For an equally small number it might be "everyone". For most people, a period of lengthy consultation takes place, with parents, guardians, sponsors, other relations and friends.

The process of consultation is an integral part of traditional Ibo marriage and a persistent element in modern marriages whose participants are concerned to "do things properly". "Proper" in this context invariably means "according to custom", even for those who no longer subscribe to the values it upholds.

There are three ways of getting married in Ibo society: the traditional way, the Christian way, and the "legal" way. The first involves customary procedure and is known formally as marriage by customary law. The second involves a church service, the exchange of marriage vows etc. The third, civil marriage, is contracted by Ordinance, in Nigeria, and in a Register Office in Britain. The first of these procedures - customary marriage - is the most widely accepted among Ibos in London. Most marriages, 76% of the total, have some basis in custom though comparatively few, 23%, are based solely on customary law. Most couples combine two or more procedures - the traditional and the christian (45% - 148); the traditonel and the civil (3% - 9); and in some cases all three (6% - 19), to comply with U.K. immigration requirements (such are the proxy marriages explained above).

The proportion with a customary element has remained consistently high over the years, with the significant exception of the period 1966-9.

(For TABLE 6.3 see next page.)

TABLE 6.3 .Style of marriage ceremony by year of marriage.(Source: Marriage Sample.)

Style of Ceremony	1950		1951-9		1960-5		1966-9		1970-2		D.K.		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Customary element	8	100	46	87	101	87	48	52	44	80	6	76	253	76
Legal and/or church only	-	-	3	5	12	10	42	45	11	20	1	12	69	21
D.K.	-	-	4	7	3	3	3	3	-	-	1	12	11	3
TOTAL	8	100	53	100	116	100	93	100	55	100	8	100	333	100

When the place of marriage is also taken into account a significant difference emerges between those made in Nigeria and those made in Britain:

TABLE 6.4 Style of marriage ceremony by place and time of marriage. (Source: Marriage Sample).

Style of Ceremony	Met and Married in Nigeria pre-1966		U.K. pre-1966		Nigeria post-1966		U.K. post-1966		Proxy	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Customary element	139	93	19	59	33	94	40	43	22	88

Adherence to custom means, at its broadest, establishing the mutual acceptability of the two families involved in the marriage. This means in effect obtaining consent before contracting the union. The manner in which this is done varies. Procedure in 1970 is not the same as it was in 1950. When the couple or one of them are in the U.K. it is not the same as when they are both at home. The variety of procedures meets with varying degrees of approval.

Customary marriage in the 1940s and 1950s was contracted in a series of well-defined stages, each designed to establish and strengthen the relationship between the two sets of kin. Every adult member had to be consulted. Everyone was rewarded with gifts or a portion of the 'dowry' (marriage payment by the men's family to the woman's, in the Ibo usage of the term); and everyone acted as witnesses who could be called to account if the wife or husband later defaulted. The following account of the procedure of consultation is given by

an informant who was himself married at that time.

"For most Ibos, especially those like me who married in the 1950s and before, the church marriage and wedding reception is an imported institution, a completion of the real ceremony. It's just a calling-in of friends to acknowledge the union which already exists in customary law. In your country (ie. Great Britain) a couple meet each other on the street today and get married tomorrow. This is the opposite of marriage in Ibo customary law.

"It starts with romance. The man sees a girl and is attracted to her. He finds a go-between from her side who will put his case for him.[1] His own people discuss the matter, and on the day they declare their intention to take the girl as a wife they call the middleman to take palm wine to her people who accept it. The girl's father pretends the matter is news to him, and agrees to ask his daughter about it and contact the man's people in due course. He prevaricates and the man has to go again. Meanwhile he is having secret meetings with the girl and the two parties are also getting to know each other. The man's anxiety increases and his intention strengthens. Discrete investigations about the background of each side are going on. But these rarely produde obstacles because the young man had asked his mother if she approved of the girl's family as soon as he became interested, and his people would not have taken the wine to them unless they approved of the match."

"As soon as the match is agreed by both sides they meet formally to fix the brideprice day. The suitor's people find out the traditions of the girl's family, who must be given drinks, who requires gifts and so on. A list is given of the things they must bring: soap for members of the girl's age group, and snuff for the old people. The formal exchanges go on, a lengthy process deliberately drawn out by the girl's people to impress on the man the import of their decision to let their daughter go. The marriage is not completed until the girl goes to the man's compound. But he must get on with the gifts,

1. The practice of employing middlemen is restricted to certain parts of Iboland, such as the eastern area from which this informant comes.

or at least make a start, because there's a lot to be done. The quickest marriage takes three months, by which time you know you're not just buying a goat.

"On the final night when he takes his wife home with him there is much merriment and feasting, and the man's party bring dancers with them to swell the crowd. This day of her 'going home' is the most important in a girl's life. At three or four a.m. the new wife is brought out by her father, who makes a speech to guide the young man in his future treatment of her. Then he formally hands her over in the presence of witnesses. Her people help her to convey her wedding presents to her new home, and the husband is again made to realise, from the wealth of them, how highly she is valued. My own wife brought with her a hand-sewing-machine, goats and so many other things that a lorry was hired to take them over the four miles to my home."

Similar accounts, varying only in details, are given by other men and women (18% - 61) of the total, who married in the 1940s and 1950s.

In later customary marriages there is still concern with the feelings of the whole family, though the people most directly concerned may come to private arrangements. A wealthy man took his future son-in-law aside at a dowry negotiation and told him that the family were asking for £235, a considerable sum in 1966. But he should pay just what he could, perhaps nothing at all, "so long as you make my daughter happy."

In London the minimum requirement for a customary marriage as defined by the young people concerned is the consent of the parents or sponsors, obtained by letter before the projected date of the wedding. The ideal arrangement requires something more. It requires writing home for advice and support as soon as one is sufficient interested in a girl to want to marry her and waiting for a reply before making any formal proposal. If, as is often the case, the girl has relations in London, their acquaintance must be cultivated, for they are her parents' representatives. When he is sure of his feelings and has

or is confident of the support of his people at home the young man takes a selection of drinks, about £20 worth if he can afford it, to the girl's relation or guardian as a sign of his good intention. Thereafter the girl's reputation will not suffer when she is continually seen in his company, and her relation's good offices are secured for the task of winning her parents' consent. The importance of winning the relation's support is considerable for it is he or she who, knowing the young man at first hand, will make a case for him if the parents want a reliable opinion. The lack if this support is sufficient to ruin the couple's chances, a point illustrated in the following case.

> A young woman introduced her prospective husband to her cousin, Mr. Okoye, who was acting as her guardian and host in London. She described him as her 'boyfriend', (a role which has no respectable equivalent in Ibo custom)and the young man said he wanted to marry her. Mr. Okoye in no uncertain terms told him to go and find someone senior from his place to come and discuss the proposal in the traditional manner, or else forget the idea.
>
> Shortly afterwards it was brought to Mr. Okoye's attention that his young cousin was going about in the company of the young man, wearing an engagement ring. Immediately he wrote to the girl, who was studying nursing in the provinces, threatening to have nothing more to do with her if this behaviour continued. In great distress she feigned sickness, took a day off and rushed up to London to plead with him. Her boyfriend persuaded a senior man in London from the same village to act on his behalf in the matter. They came to Okoye with drinks (whisky and Martell Brandy) to discuss the proposed marriage formally. Okoye wrote to the girl's parents who said that he could go ahead with the arrangements, and honour satisfied, the couple married in church shortly afterwards.Okafor gave the girl away and at the reception sat with senior people representing the bridegroom's side on the platform.

When there are no relations, senior people are older townspeople. A girl studying in the provinces wrote to the president of her clan union in London for his opinion of a young man who wanted to marry her. The young man in question visited the elder with drinks, to ask him to "put in a good word for me."

In the absence of senior people (and sometimes when they are present) it is thought sufficient to write direct to the parents. A girl may choose to contact her father before he receives a formal request for her from the young man. Alternatively, the latter may write to both sets of parents simultaneously. Generally he waits until he has obtained the support of his own parents before writing to his prospective father-in-law, and his family make approaches at the same time. Once parental support has been obtained the couple disregard the view of more remote kin in London if there are one or two who disapprove of the match. Most people, however, like Okoye, regard it as their right and duty to participate in the marriage of a relation,"because we know we are all going home" (ie. and will have to answer for what happens here). Their views are sought as a matter of courtesy, but efforts to reconcile them to a choice they regard as inappropriate depend on their status and the closeness of the relationship. If they disapprove arguments are produced to bring about a change of mind, but failure to do so does not always affect the decision to marry. The prospective husband or wife may simply be introduced as such.

Those marriages - 21% (69) of the total - which took place without the approval of parents occurred largely in Britain (65) and mostly between 1966 and 1969 (42). Marriages in which the views of parents are either not sought or are disregarded if they are unfavourable, are regarded in some circles as quite legitimate. But on the whole such procedure meets with disapproval. Ibos make a distinction between marriages done properly and 'marriages of convenience' or 'marriage on the cheap'. The latter, as the term suggests, are viewed with a certain amount of scorn. 'Proper' marriages include all those in which the consent of the parents, guardians or other relations is obtained beforehand, and one or more of the traditional exchanges are made to seal the relationship between the two families. The traditional exchanges

between families, the wine-taking and dowry, the hospitality associated with the bride's going home or with the wedding reception for many guests from both sides, involve considerable expense. People who regard family involvement, and hence these outlays, as important, describe the private arrangement as 'marriage on the cheap', motivated by selfish desires and a lack of due consideration.

According to this view, marriages contracted during the wqr years and subsequently, without the approval of parents being sought, were motivated by the special circumstances of life in London, and in wartime conditions. Just as the stay in Britain is temporary, so are these unions. They are 'marriages of convenience' (ie. personal convenience as opposed to family interests) which will dissolve in Nigeria as easily as they were made in Britain. Such marriages are not, it is said, recognised at home, and are therefore at considerable risk when the couple return.

People who take this view attribute such arrangements to the way of life in the host society where hasty marriage based on infatuation, called 'love', is thought to be the norm. Some of the students, it is believed, are influenced by the prevailing atmosphere of permissiveness, begin to have girlfriends and boyfriends, and drift into arrangements which are bound to fail since they have no foundation in custom.

This view, needless to say, is not shared by most of the people who marry without satisfying customary requirements, though some of them do define their situation in that way. Neither is it held by some conventionally married couples who feel that times have changed, and not necessarily for the worse.

It is a view, however, which is not founded simply on prejudice. The following couple is typical of many who drifted into marriage.

> Solomon and Ngozi had known each other at home but had never been particularly friendly. In London they remet at a party and started visiting each other. Without any intentions Solo allowed the relationship to develop.

They began shopping and eating together, spending weekends together and finally cohabiting. It was during the war, and the need for economy and for moral support helped to legitimise their behaviour. For a time Ngozi was supporting Solo in full-time study on the basis of her earnings as a secretary. Everyone had the impression they would marry, an impression reinforced by Ngozi's habit of wearing an engagement ring.

In 1970 Solo wrote home to his father, hinting at the relationship. His family objected strongly, for reasons which were not clear. It was evident, however, that the idea of Solo, or any of his brothers for that matter, marrying from Ngozi's family could not be entertained. But by that time it was difficult to terminate relations. Everyone had been expecting marriage and Ngozi had made investments in the relationship, not least of which was her reputation and future chances of marriage should the affair come to nothing. The couple continued to see each other (they no longer lived together), and Ngozi to press for marriage.

Eventually they had a quiet register office wedding without the consent of Solo's father and so without the customary rapport between the families. Nowquarrels develop easily because one partner is quite willing to let the marriage end. Solo is in trouble not only with his own people but also with Ngozi's because he married "without enquiring who she belonged to" (ie. who sent her to Britain and paid for her education, and so is entitled to the dowry etc.)

Other uneasy arrangements reflect the tension between family expectations and individual interests which become redefined in the new situation. A young man whose father wanted to 'tie him up' before he came to Britain(lest he make an undesirable match while away from family influence) took him on the eve of his departure to see the daughter of an equally influential family in the same town. The boy's acceptance of the girl was made a condition of his coming to Britain, and so they were married by customary law. In London he became interested in an Ibo girl and wished to marry her. Meanwhile pressure was being exerted from home, particularly by his wife's people, to speed up the arrangements for her journey to join him. It was difficult to ignore the pressure since townspeople in London, too, who were friendly with both families and did not wish to see relations between them soured, joined in the attempt to reunite the pair. The young man decided to ignore the pressure, a decision which was

soon reinforced by the difficulty other people were experiencing in getting their wives and fiancees out of Biafra. He married the girl he had met in London by British law in 1968.

The problem of getting their fiancees to join them in Britain after 1967 explains the actions of many young men who married 'improperly'. During the war few people were returning to Nigeria or leaving for other destinations and among these who postponed their return were single men of marriageable age. Others who had been trying to trace fiancees in Nigeria were unable in most cases to bring them to Britain until 1970 or 1971. Sometimes they gave up the attempt, either because they could not afford the fare and passport expenses, or because the girl had married someone else, probably a soldier, or because the men themselves had met and married women in London.

Marriages of the 'improper' kind tend to begin with a meeting at a party, dance or home of a mutual acquaintance. There follows a period of courtship which may be a few weeks or a few years, followed by a quiet wedding. The latter takes place in a register office or a church, and is generally followed by a small party for friends. The exclusive nature of the social gathering is explained partly by the feeling of the couple that the wedding is a personal affair to be celebrated in private with a few close friends. It is also explained by the explicit withdrawal of support and approval by relations and townspeople who regard the arrangement as illegitimate and do not care to be associated with it. Their attendance would be reported to the people at home, who would assume that they had encouraged the couple. Even when they publicly withdraw their support. However, relations and senior townspeople are held accountable by the family for permitting the marriage to take place. Frequently all communication ceases between the family and the offending son or daughter.

Not all couples who adopt this procedure so so out of a conviction that it is right. During the war many who felt unable to communicate with home intended to rectify the matter as soon as peace returned, or on their own return home.

Parents have now written to ask how they can get to their daughter-in-law's place, and some have started to negotiate dowries, two or three years after the union of their son and daughter.

Similarly, not everyone who breaks off a customary engagement is forced to celebrate his wedding in private. This is especially the case if his new wife had the approval of her own family or if the couple are popular in Ibo circles in London. The most favourable conditions for marrying in this way are when a man is "looking after himself here", or self-supporting. Before the was such people were generally orphans or self-made men who owed nothing to their kin. The war increased the number of financially independent people (indeed, the relationship of dependency was reversed) but since everyone was affected equally it did not thereby remove all the constraints of custom. Some people did regard it as a license for freedom of choice and action but most felt and feel now that the situation as far as social obligations are concerned remains largely unaltered. It is still important to marry with approval.

This description of the process of selection and legalisation is completed by an illustration of a customary wedding in London in 1970.

> Because of her insistence that the marriage should be done in the traditional manner, Agnes is much admired. In her own words, she and her husband "are people who respect tradition, which means putting the family first". They met at a dance in London in 1967 and two years later decided to marry. In 1970 when the war was over, Emeka approached Agnes's half-brother in London and wrote to her relations at home. The families wrote back telling the couple to wait until their respective backgrounds had been investigated. Three months later this had been done and fourteen of Emeka's relations travelled the hundred miles to Agnes's home to open formal negotiations.
>
> In London Emeka's in-law assumed the role of middle man, arranging the necessary meetings. These were few, only one or two as compared with the four or five at home, because none of the people involved had the time for lengthy get-togethers, because there was not much to be done, and because their knowlwdge of the correct procedure was limited by the fact of their youth at the time they left Nigeria.

Agnes's relations, two half-brothers and an elderly cousin, knew Emeka well as he had visited them frequently during the years of his courtship. But when the go-ahead was given from home a formal meeting was required. Notice of the meeting was given in advance by the middleman, and on the appointed day Emaka went with his people (the in-law and close friends) to Agnes's home, bearing whisky and a wedding ring. Agnes had bought kola nuts at the local market "for without them no talking would have been possible." Drinks and food had been prepared in readiness for the visitors. Agnes and the other women retired to the kitchen, feigning ignorance of the purpose of Emeka's visit.

To open the meeting, drinks were offered, first to the ancestors "who were here before we were". They were also offered "to the old man of this place" (ie. Chaucer and Milton). Then the talking began. Emeka's in-law on behalf of his party, formally introduced the subject of their visit. They had come about Agnes, whom they wanted to marry. Agnes's people replied that they would ask Agnes's feelings on the matter.

Her senior relation in London, the elderly cousin went with his people into the kitchen, and solemnly asked Agnes if she really wanted to marry Emeka. She replied that she did, and when pressed for a reason said with a laugh, "because I want to". The party returned to the dining-room and told the other side that she had agreed. Agnes was called into the room, and addressed by the elderly cousin:

"Agnes, my daughter, in the kitchen just now you said that there was a man here you wanted to marry. You said if he dies tomorrow you will die ieth him. If he falls into the water you will fall with him. Anything he is eating you will eat with him." (An informant suggests that this part is a post-colonial innovation, an adaptation of the marriage vows in the Christian church ceremony). "Do you see that man here? Can you show us? Sip this whisky and then hand the glass to the person you want to marry, to show us who he is, and that you know who he is." (i.e. that Agnes was not being forced to marry a stranger against her will.)

This was the climax of the ceremony and spirits were high. As she approached Emeka's side of the room with the glass, his people called out individually, "Come to me!" "Are you coming to Me?" and so on. She replied firmly that she knew which one she wanted. As she handed the glass to Emeka she gave a slight curtsy, acknowledging his authority as the head of the family. He took a sip and the marriage contract was made. At the same time he produced the wedding ring from his pocket and placed it on her finger. (Another element taken from the Christian ceremony).

A lavish church wedding followed, which was attended by about three hundred people. Agnes's full brother was sent from Nigeria to give her away. One hundred wedding invitations, and later pieces of wedding cake, were sent to people at home. The church service, said Agnes, was inessential for the marriage contract and did not, in itself, constitute marriage. But it was important for status reasons and was a way of notifying all the townspeople and friends that she and Emeka had taken this important step.

The last formal stage in the wedding came three months after the ceremony, when Agnes's people came to see how she was getting on in her new home. Her half-brother notified Emaka in Advance and on the appointed day Agnes started to cook early in the morning. The excellent food and her splendid attire showed them that her husband was looking after her well, and the party went away satisfied.

On Emeka's side there was, in fact, an irregularity. Apparently his family had had their eyes on a local girl for several years, "and he had been very much in love with her before coming to the U.K." in 1961. But by 1970, when he wanted to marry, Agnes seemed a better choice. People said he was having difficulty in bringing the other girl out of Nigeria, difficulty which was emotional rather than financial though that, too, was no mean consideration. They were by now virtually strangers. In his quandry he asked the advice of several friends in London, who were divided in their opinions. An informant told with great emphasis how she and her husband had advised him to make up his own mind, a recommendation which becomes meaningful when it is remembered that traditionally his mind would have been made up for him. The breach of the traditional agreement was made palatable by the wealth and influence of Agnes's family. Emeka's father, at any rate, seemed satisfied with the new arrangement. He wrote four times to Emeka with names of certain people in their hometown whom he should notify about the wedding. They were close to the family and the lack of respect shown by failing to inform them that he was getting married would have robbed Emeka's family of their cooperation in future.

From this description of the process of selection and legalisation the question of consistency in the pattern of choices between the various alternatives arises. It would seem likely that couples who behave unconventionally in one respect do so at every stage in the process of getting married: that they choose their partners independently, either do not seek advice and consent or ignore unsympathetic responses, and celebrate their union in private. In short one would expect a clear division on the lines of customary and unconventional behaviour. Couples who attempt to satisfy customary requirements would consult their parents and relations, or their closest equivalents in Britain. They would expect them to conduct the negotiations and arrange the wedding, invite all who are related by descent or affinity, real or classificatory (i.e. townspeople), and resort to them subsequently if a crisis occurs in the marriage. Couples, on the other hand, who are not concerned with traditional procedures would not consult anyone. They would arrange the wedding themselves and invite selected people - friends, acquaintances, colleagues and those relations who approved of their conduct - to enjoy it with them. These two types represent distinct and formally opposed sets of values which, translated into marital norms and practice, produce quite different patterns of behaviour. In practice, however, only a minority of marriage conform completely to one type or the other. Most marriages are a combination of both of them.

There emerges from the foregoing analysis a picture of relatively minor changes over time, with a high degree of adherence to customary procedures in the present period. The contemporary situation is complex. It is characterised by independent meetings but a careful investigation of a prospective partner's background and circumstances: by a style of ceremony which formally acknowledges the place of kin and townspeople in arranging and celebrating the marriage but by consultation with kin which is often a mere formality.

Post-war marriages are contracted in a situation of ambiguity and uncertainty. Young people claim the right to choose their own partners and no longer defer

to their parents in the selection process. But lipservice is paid to the traditional ideal when consent is formally requested from a fiancee's relative or guardian and token gifts are presented. Couples who choose to celebrate their union as a private affair between individuals are under pressure to attribute a role to senior people and to recognise the interest of townspeople and relations as legitimate.

The persistence of custom poses a problem for analysis in the light of two factors: the exposure of the Ibo in London to normative influences and practical pressures which run counter to ethnic particularism; and the absence of institutional mechanisms for restricting heterosexual contact among the young, such as exist in other minority groups. What these pressures are, and the possible mechanisms for coping with them, may be discovered by reference to another minority group with which the Ibos are occasionally compared: the Jews.

Mechanisms of social control: the Jewish experience. The Jewish minority is normally categorised as religious rather than ethnic. However, it shares with the Ibos the dominant characteristic of an ethnic minority. It is an ascriptive group, membership of which depends mainly on inheritance or descent.[1] As such the Jewish community faces the problems of identity and exclusiveness common to all ascriptive groups. The main problem is that of perpetuation. Placement by familial ascription requires control over mate selection and to a lesser extent over other processes such as religious or ethnic ritual or the symbolic representations of social status, which are vital to the group's interest. Since a status can be taught to children more thoroughly when both parents occupy it to begin with the principle of endogamy within

1. J.F.Scott (1965) p 515 f.n. "An ascriptive group is one of any size whose members are mainly recruited on an ascriptive basis and who in turn prefer to restrict membership in this group to those who gain it by inheritance or descent. ie. familial ascription. Concrete examples in complex societies are social classes or strata (because even in achievement oriented industrial societies the placement of persons in the various strata is largely accomplished by familial ascription), 'ethnic groups' and solidary racial groups or castes."

the ascriptive group is upheld. The problem facing senior members of ascriptive groups, therefore, consists in controlling the sexual relationships of their young. An examination of this problem in the Jewish minority in the U.S.A.[1] is illuminating for the Ibo case.

Like the Ibos, the Jews are in some ways assimilated into the dominant group but in others remain distinctive and separate. The Jews, according to R.J.R. Kennedy, are culturally assimilated in all ways but one.[2] They speak the dominant language. They have adopted the (public) eating and clothing habits. They participate in the educational system (Hebrew education is an 'aside' to facilitate religious participation). They are active in all the economic pursuits of the society (although in some they are proportionally over-represented). The one exception is intermarriage: the Jews have no preferential marriage outside their own group.

There are clear indications that the incidence of Jewish intermarriage is proportionately less than that of other religious groups and although the rate is rising, it is rising much more slowly. A study in New Haven revealed that the Jewish group was completely endogamous in 1870, was 93.7% endogamous in 1940 and 97.4% in 1955.[3] At the present time, for the whole country, only 8% of Jewish marriages are mixed, as compared with one half of all protestant marriages and one quarter of all Catholic.[4]

Jewish men outmarry more than Jewish women. In Koenig's study of Bamford, Connecticut, forty out of fifty-nine Jewish partners in mixed marriages were male Jews.[5] In Roanoke only four out of the forty-five Jewish partners in mixed marriages were female.

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1. Equivalent data for Jews in Britain does not unfortunately exist. The American preoccupation with the issues of acculturation and assimilation related to the historical development of the society has produced a wealth of literature on religious and ethnic intermarriage.
2. R.J.R. Kennedy (1963)
3. R.J.R. Kennedy (1944) p 331-339.
4. A. Gordon (1966)
5. Quoted in G. Simpson and J.M. Yinger (1953)

Higher class Jews of both sexes outmarry proportionately more than their lower class co-religionists. Highly educated, professional Jewish men are most likely to marry out of the group, and even Jewish women who intermarry are more likely to come from an upper than a lower class. Inter-faith marriages constitute 8.5% of lower class marriages in the United States and 19.5% of in the highest class.[1] Even so, Jewish upper class individuals are more endogamous than their non-Jewish counterparts.

Jewish intermarriage is regarded as a great social problem by religious leaders. Opposition to it is rationalised in terms of culture conflict, the harmful effect on the children, and other consequences. The real reason, expressed with clarity by such informed and interested opponents of intermarriage as Rabbi A. Gordon, is that intermarriage threatens the identity, homogeneity and survival of the group. The character of the Jewish community and of the Jewish religion are complementary, expressed in the value attached to family and community. Thus the cohesiveness of the group is strongest is family affairs.

This leads to a collective interest in who marries whom, in the selection of mates and in the exercise of group effort to ensure that preferential rules are observed. Resistance to assimilation is enforced by the intensity of Jewish social life, which is legitimated by the values of Judaism. Jewish religious 'commitment', according to Gordon, is in a strong feeling of belongingness rather than to the belief in a personal God, or the value of prayer, or the observance of a distinctive ritual. In this respect the Jews differ from Catholics and Protestants. To be a 'Good Jew', says Gordon, is related to family life rather than theological concepts. The value placed on family and people is greater than that placed on ritual and theology.

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1. A. Gordon (1966)

These values are expressed in and sustained by Jewish communal activities. Social cohesion in Jewish life is reflected in their tendency to live together, described in detail in a study of Jews in Chicago.[1] In Chicago, the Jews have become "Americans" to the extent that they have shed their "foreigness", are hostile to an eccentric Jewish sect, Hasidim, who have settled in their midst, and have accepted the American status symbols such as good jobs and housing. Voluntary residential segregation in a high status area is themeans by which they affirm the values of Jewish family and community life. These values are perpetuated by means of neighbourhood schools and local associations, which limit the social interaction of young Jews and non-Jews. Jewish communal centres provide cultural and recreational activities and are "one of the most effective bulwarks against intermarriage."[2] There are Hebrew schools (attended by about 50% of Jewish children for a few hours a week) and youth associations, philanthropic activities, cultural activities and religious ceremonies to mark the major events in life, all of which help to promote group consciousness.

Jewish college youth, particularly the girls, are protected from contact with non-Jews and the universalistic values imparted in higher edudation by belonging to Jewish sororities and fraternities. In a fascinating article on the role of American sororities in class and ethnic endogamy, J.F.Scott describes the process whereby ascriptive groups control the marital choice of their young people.[3] The threat of hypogamy (marriage down) and of ethnic intermarraige is great in those institutions of higher education which do not reinforce early socialization. In ethnically segregated schools the maintenance of endogamy does not require special secondary organs such as the sorority. In Jewish colleges therefore the sorority system hardly

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1. E.Rosenthal (1960) p 275-288
2. I.Eisenstein (1957)
3. J.F.Scott (1965) p 514-527

exists. B ut in the large heterogeneous state universities the system is well developed to control the social life of young women and ensure that they meet the "right people" . This may account for the relatively low incidenceof intermarriage among Jewish upperclass women. The even lower rate of outmarriage by lower class Jewish womenmay be explained by the fact that women in general have few opportunities for meeting men in other groups; that religious and other institutional controls exert a stronger influence on women; and that men take the initiative in dating and courtship.

In view of these controlson marital selection among young Jews, the questioh arises as to why intermarriage occurs at all. Gordon suggests that factors facilitating intermarriage between Jews and gentiles are the questioning of traditional attitudes towards the family; declining authority in the family; demographic changes which upset the sex ratio and affect family solidarity; higher education for women, which removes them from the parental sphere of influence; softening parental attitudes to intermarriage; and the decline of religious influences with the development of scientific thought. H e points to the cultural homogeneity in American society, brought about in part by the reduction in immigration. In 1961, 94.6% of the population was native born and 81% of their parents were too. Unity of thought and acceptance of a set of secular humanistic moral and ethical principles and community responsibilities are imparted by the educational system so that disparity in the values of cultural groups has been reduced. In particular, the influence of the past and the memory of past hostilities has diminished so that there is less need for marriage alliances which will promote Jewish solidarity against discrimination and oppression.

Packard indicates that social and economic discrimination still exists.[1] There is evidence, however, that Jews have one of the highest levels of

1. V.Packard (1959)

aspiration and also of social mobility. The latter is seen in the disproportionate number of Jewish men in institutions of higher education and in certain high ranking professions (eg. lawand medicine) One reason for the high rate of intermarriage among Jewish men with high educational and occupational achievement may be inferred from an article by S.A.Weinstock.[1]

Weinstock suggests that "the higher a person's place on the occupational scale, the more this behaviour patterns are going to be prescribed for him, especially if he seeks to advance his position." This is because higher ranking occupational roles have a greater number of peripheral elements - manners, speech, politics, religion etc. The role of executive in a large corporation demands a larger commitment of life space than does that of a road sweeper, for instance. Weinstock's conclusion is that a highly motivated man needs to acculturate.[2] Following Weinstock it may be suggested that a gentile wife is sought as an aid to or as a consequence of acculturation for upward mobility. For this and other reasons it would appear that Jewish college students are likely to be as much affected by educational and class considerations as by ethnic origins in their choice of a spouse. Although many Jews have achieved high status <u>without</u> marrying out of the group, the requirement of cultural assimilation for upward mobility in certain occupations may be a motivating force for those who choose gentile wives.

A more likely reason for intermarriage among upperclass Jews is social, geographical and occupational propinquity, which has been established as an important factor in the selection of a mate. Living or working close to non-Jews facilitates intermarriage. For instance, very few Jewish girls become nurses, whereas medicine is the most highly masked profession among Jewish men, and doctors frequently marry nurses. One writer, indeed,

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1. S.A.Weinstock (1963) p 144-149

2, Unless, of course, his particular occupational sphere is monopolised by members of his own ascriptive group. One could argue that certain occupations favoured by Jews are monopolised in this way, which detracts from the utility of Weinstock's argument for the present case.

attributes the acceleration of intermarriage entirely to the place of Jews in the occupational spectrum.[1] Because they are overrepresented in the intellectual and creative professions the proportion of Jews who attend universities is very high. But there are comparatively few Jewish girls at these institutions.

The evidence presented here indicates that at a certain social level socio-economic considerations are increasingly outweighing ethnic ones in the choice of a spouse.[2] Nonetheless, physical and normative constraints in the form of residential segregation, youth associations and sororities serve to reinforce the norm of endogamy in the Jewish community.

Mechanisms of social control: the Ibo case. When the situation of the Ibos is compared with that of American Jewish youth, some common features emerge. The first is the emphasis on endogamy, especially for women. Another similarity is the distance from close kin and exposure to universalistic principles in educational and economic activities, which contradict the principle of ethnic particularism and threaten the interests of the group. A third is the underpinning of community values by elaborate ceremonial. The most striking similarity is the sense of "family" which in the Jewish case is more powerful than the tenets of religion in enforcing the norm of endogamy and conformity with other group norms in respect of marriage.

There are at the same time certain structural differences between the Jews and the Ibos. An example is the absence in the latter of institutional mechanisms like sororities and formal youth groups to control social contact among the young. Another difference is the Jewish commitment to the American

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1. Rubinstein (1963)

2. Scott (1965) p 518 maintains that class endogamy is more pervasive and is additionally important because it is respected also by those committed to the norm of ethnic endogamy. When the norms of ethnic and class endogamy interact, the maintenance of the ethnic norm is more difficult.

way of life and desire for upward mobility in terms of the culturally defined goals of American society. A further point of difference is the Ibo emphasis on patrilineal descent which adds a new dimension to the position of women. These contrasts do not outweigh the usefulness of the comparison but may be used to bring out the uniqueness and complexity of the Ibo case.

The norm of endogamy characteristic of ascriptive groups operates more strongly for women than men for reasons which may be related to the principle of patrilineal descent. In a society characterised by patrilineal descent women who marry outside the group are lost to it and so are their children. Just as highly placed Indian women in the Hindu caste system are hedged about by elaborate and strictly enforced sexual taboos because they are "the gateway to the caste" , so the pressures are strong on Ibo women to select husbands from the appropriate category.[1] Ibo women who deviate from this rule - a far smaller proportion than the men who outmarry - are heavily criticized. Would-be deviants are discouraged by the popular belief that a non-Ibo would not know how to look after an Ibo wife properly, and that a girl who had been involved with an outsider would not stand a chance of marrying an Ibo sould she desire to doso subsequently. The problems peculiar to Ibo women may be left for a moment while those of young Ibos in general are considered.

In interaction with non-Ibos in the educational and economic institutions of the host society, Ibos are exposed to an ideology of marriage which emphasised personal choice based on mutual attraction. This is consistent with the achievement orientation which characterises other spheres of activity. The suppression of ascribed status and the emphasis on achieved status corresponds to the ideology of individualism which dominates industrial societies. Romantic love, to paraphrase P.G.Rivière, is a reflection of

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1. M.Douglas (1965) p 125-6. and 144-5

the same individualism. It is "the final expression of individual choice, and thus the logical ground for marriage in a society in which an ideology of individualism holds sway." [1] Scott makes the same point in saying that "the emotions called 'love' characteristically fail to guarantee respect for any prior classification of the persons involved, including classification into strata or ethnic groups" [2]

Ibo attitudes and behaviour are thus influenced by two conflicting sets of ideas about marriage. One emphasised romantic love and individual choice, the other collective arrangements in the interest of the ascriptive group. The ideal types of marriage may be related to the general values of individualism and collective interest, and of ascription and achievement orientation, as follows:

MARRIAGE	'MODERN VIEW'	'TRADITIONAL VIEW'
What it is:	a union between two persons.	an alliance between two families.
What it is for:	legitimate procreation, companionship and emotional security.	legitimate procreation, reciprocal exchange of goods and services between affines.
Choice of spouse based on:	personal attraction, love, compatibility.	ascribed status, especially family background, character traits necessary for performance of conjugal role.
Style of meeting:	independent of family.	arranged or by introduction, or obtaining approval for independent choice.
Type of ceremony:	church, register office or ordinance, followed by private reception.	customary; ritual exchanges between two families; hospitality extended to whole community.
Conduct of marital affairs:	autonomy.	involvement of kin.
Conjugal roles:	joint.	segregated.

The dichotemy may be extended as follows:

1. P.C. Riviere (1971) p.72
2. J.F. Scott (1965) p.521

SOCIETY CHARACTERISED BY:

ACHIEVED STATUS	ASCRIBED STATUS
Dominance of husband and wife relationship over other kinship relationships.	dominance of father-son relationships over others.[1]
bureaucratic values	absence of bureaucratic structures
social redundancy; interaction channelled through formal institutional channels.	importance of kinship and particularistic relationships.
Specialised relationships	undifferentiated institutions, multiplex relationships.

The semantically opposed variables are termed "traditional" and "modern" for the reason that the former tend to be upheld by senior members of the ascriptive group and the latter by its younger members. The adoption of values associated with modernity threatens the existence of the group to the extent that they are anti-particularistic.

The threat to group interests posed by exposure to universalistic values exists in the Ibo community as it does in the Jewish minority in America. In both cases the young acquire anti-particularistic tendencies in the course of work and study, and in daily interaction with members of the host society.

As Scott points out, institutions of higher education in Western societies tend to challenge the values of ascriptive groups. In encouraging competition and celebrating excellence in achievement they necessarily threaten the persistence of ascribed status. Occasionally they serve ascriptive interests by being recruited exclusively from particular ethnic or religious groups. More often they do not enforce early socialisation in this way but run directly counter to it. Public institutions of higher education in Britain

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1. F.K.L.Hsu (1965) points out that where one relationship in the kinship syndrome is emphasised the others are de-emphasised. When the father-son relationship is dominant, duties and obligations towards parents are greater than those towards spouse, and the parents choose the latter. The interests of the elders and the kin group are greater than those of the couple, and the marriage is sustained by the former. When the husband-wife relationship is dominant, the parent-child relationship is temporary. This situation is logically associated with monogamy, the individual choice of a spouse, and the easy dissolution of a marriage.

are invariably heterogeneous. University students are therefore at greater risk o f conversion to new ideas than other members of the community. Everyone, however, is exposed to normative pressures in the course of work and exposure to the mass media, in particular popular newspapers and television. Popular media such as these have a pronounced romantic bias. The primacy of the individual over the group is stressed, particularly where youthful interests are in conflict with those of the older generation.

The theoretical importance of love is derived from its capacity to motivate exogamy in the face of some norm of endogamy. If the group is to persist, love must be controlled. The ideology of marriage supported by senior members of the ascriptive group emphasises control over marital selection in the interests of the group, while that of the younger generation stresses personal choice based on mutual attraction which may cut accross social boundaries.

This being the case, institutional controls are required to curb youthful tendencies. Youth organisations, sororities and fraternities, are not a feature of Ibo social organisation. Such formal institutional controls on heterosexual relationships are apparently lacking. Yet [illegible] deviations from the norm, it has been seen, are comparatively few. The question arises as to why this is so. The answer is found in informal processes: the application of social sanctions in the form of gossip; a labelling process which uses unflattering stereotypes of deviant women; the moral pressures of the local community, and the scrutiny of kin; withdrawal of support and demonstrations of disapproval by community leaders and relations; and the use of ritual to reinforce the ideology of the group.

While formal youth associations are absent, the values of the ascriptive group are perpetuated by means of other intermediate associations - local unions. In the forum of the local meeting the activities of the young are under scrutiny. Real as opposed to classificatory kin are better able

to apply sanctions since they carry influence with parents and families at home. But gossip and disapproval voiced by other members of the local community weigh heavily on the young who often anticipate their practical help and moral support. Although attendance is only formally compulsory, persistent absence from local activities stimulates unfavourable comment and speculation about conduct. The informal sanction of gossip is applied with extra severity against women.

The dilemma of the single Ibo woman in London is acute. All women expect to marry. The notion of a career woman who remains single by choice and force of circumstance is unacceptable. Single women in London are of marriageable age and must find husbands if they are not already engaged on arrival. But there are problems in achieving this aim. Although Ibo women are scarce in relation to Ibo men in London certain factors influence their eligibility for marriage. One is the image of promiscuity which is readily attached to single Ibo girls. Another is the marketability of non-Ibo women.

The conventional notion of seemliness requires that a woman stays at home quietly, avoiding public gatherings such as parties.(Local gatherings are acceptable since they are 'family' occasions.) It is a compliment to be told that "you were so quiet (before we married) that I didn't even know you were here!" But the social isolation such conduct imposes in the circumstances of life in London makes such action intolerable. Companionship is therefore sought with other Ibos, which means gradual involvement in social activities. Inevitably gossip arises. If a girl is seen continuously in the company of one man it is assumed that they will marry, and her honour is severely compromised if they do not. If she is seen with several different men, however, she is labelled 'promiscuous' and her chances of matrimony reduced. A premium is placed on "good conduct" in the selection of a wife, both in traditional society and in the contemporary situation.

But the need to find a husband in London is pressing. The chances of a 'been-to' finding a husband on returning to Nigeria are slender. She is considered too well-travelled and sophisticated for a man who has not been abroad, and he wonders why she has been unable to find a husband already. Other "been-tos" ask the same question. There is evidence that the expectations of difficulty of this sort is misplaced after the war when a highly educated wife brings material advantages which outweigh her doubtful moral standards. Possibly the difficulty has always been exaggerated, an aspect of popular myth which is propogated to control the activities of young women in Britain. Scott's notion of "timely marriage" for Jewish college girls is this especially relevant to youhg Ibo women in London. Not only are they, like American college girls, nubile and therefore at their most attractive as marriage partners. Their temporary stay in Britain further limits the period in which they must find husbands.

The notion of timely marriage rests on the idea of marketability. In marriage in a western class society a woman exchanges physical attractiveness for status and security. The value placed on feminine youth puts older and plainer women at a disadvantage. The possession of educational qualifications and independent status does not remedy this disadvantage since a woman does not, in normal circumstances, confer status on her husband.

In the Ibo community the situation is slightly different, for educational qualifications confer status equally on men and women (for they imply earning power) and are a marketing advantage in women. None-the-less, disparaging remarks are made about women who look as old as their husbands, and about older single women. An age age is an necessary (although not sufficient) cond ition of marriage.

The importance of education puts Ibo women in competition for husbands with highly educated non-Ibos. They are at a disadvantage also because of the hostile stereotype of single Ibo girls in London held by most men.

Another factor in the situation of Ibo women looking for husbands is the capacity of the Ibo family system to accommodate non-Ibo wives. The principle of patrilineal descent ensures that foreign women who possess the necessary qualifications - good conduct, good education etc. - are regarded as potential wives. Ibo men do not, like their Jewish counterparts, seek upward mobility withinthe occupational structure of the host society as an end in itself. They do not choose foreign wives to further their interests in the framework of English society. But as long as non-Ibo women can contribute children, intelligence and industry to the family they are acceptable to the people at home. The non-Ibo origins of foreign wives render them ineligible only to certain categories of men. One category is that of first sons of high statusfamilies whose marriages have political significance in that they establish alliances with a stress on affinity. Marriage is not entered into simply for the purpose of procreation.

Following Mary Douglas it may be argued that the image of promiscuity is itself a reflection of the principle of patrilineal descent. Since women are themeans by which the descent group is perpetuated, sexual taboos like marriage norms are stronger for them than they are for men. If women engage in sexual activities outside the framework of legal marriage the contents of the sacred vessel, to use Douglas's image, are diluted. Hence the insistence by men that women uphold certain standards of sexual morality which they themselves do not necessarily uphold. In some societies, like the Nuer, the Nyakyusa or the Bemba, ideas of purity and pollution are enlisted to bind women (and men) to their allotted sexual and conjugal roles. Deviations from conventional role-playing are polluting and endanger the life and health of the spouse, the family or the community.[1]

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1. M.Douglas (1965) p 129-139

In the Ibo community sexual conduct outside the framework of marriage, while it does not carry supernatural sanctions, is polluting for women and reduces their eligibility as wives. A system of dual morality condemns in women what it condones in men. Women comply with the sexual demands of men in the hope thatit will lead to marriage. This was the case with Solomon and Ngozi, quoted above. But reciprocation by women is counter-productive . It arouses unfavourable comment and creates a social stigma which reduces a girl's chances of marriage in the long run.

An interpretation of the position of women in these terms does not, however, account for the fact that in a patrilineal society such as the Ibos the children assume the status of their father, whoever their mother is. Another limitation on Douglas's argument is the fact that dual morality is practised extensively and not confined to societies with a tradition of patrilineal descent. It may therefore be more realistic to regard the position of Ibo women simply as a matter of sexual politics.

The ambivalence of men and women towards each other produces a situation of remarkable tension. Women are attracted to men as potential husbands but fear them as exploiters and denigrators. After a few months of residence in Britain, newly arrived and unmarried Ibo girls remark upon the disregard and often ill-concealed contempt in which they are held by men. The latter expect sexual favours and are confirmed in their suspicions of promiscuity when they are given. Thus in the frustrating experience of a young man in search of a wife, women "become tense" when men try to open a conversation. Even younger women (whose youth and education could be expected to make them more liberal in outlook) are on edge, expecting sexual advances and knowing that to respond is to lose one's reputation but to refuse is to cut short a relationship which might lead tomarriage.

Men are attracted to newly arrived Ibo girls as potential wives but predict that their sexual conduct will soon deteriorate. The predictions sometimes turn out to be self-fulfilling.[1] The innocent girl is forced

1. The capacity of labelling to create deviance has been noted by H.S.Becker (1963) p 19-22

into the company of the 'promiscuous' by being labelled as such by her more 'respectable' peers and relations, and avoided. Women are criticised not only for their sexual incontinence, real or imagined, but for their materialism, in accepting gifts in return for sexual favours. It is a state of affairs, however, in which the men collude, by offering such gifts and expecting sexual favours in return. Some female informants have totally avoided interaction with Ibo men since all contact, however casual, is personally damaging. A young married woman who is shortly to rejoin her husband in Nigeria, enjoys the company of Yoruba and Ghanaian friends but no Ibos apart from some close kin. For her the need to find a husband is not a relevant consideration and she can afford the insults which her association with men outside the group brings. Another informant, this time single, associates with non-Ibos precisely for the reason that her presence in London is thereby not known and her conduct not the subject of gossip. Although her chances of marriage to an Ibo of equivalent age, education and experience in London are thereby reduced, her independent means and good connections in Nigeria raise her prospects of marriage on her return home.

For most girls these advantages and safeguards do not exist. Their situation, however, is not as difficult as it has been in the past. It is frequently said that the war has improved the chances of unmarriageable women by raising their scarcity value, and emphasising education and earning power at the expense of traditionally valued qualities such as impeccable sexual conduct as criteria in mate selection.

In short, the pressure to marry, which rests on the popular view of married status as the only respectable one for an adult woman, and the problem of finding a husband in Britain, constrain single women to observe social convention. The picture of constraint should not, however, be overexaggerated. It is often said (and there is some evidence to support

the assertion) that cohabitation is common. Evidence suggests however that the step of setting up a household is taken only when the girl is assured that marriage will be the outcome, and this indeed is often the case. It seems probable that cohabitation occurs in only a minority of cases.

More Ibo men cohabit that women. The imbalance is explained by the large number of common non-Ibo common law wives. Cohabitation as a response to normative pressure to avoid formal entanglement with an outsider is dealt with in the following section. Before examining the various responses made by the young men (young women tend, for reasons stated above, to conform to parental expectations) the account of control mechanisms is completed by reference to elders and the role of ritual in activating ideology.

Gossip and informal sanctions are more in evidence than formal mechanisms. There is no institutional equivalent to the sorority unless it is the town union system, whose effectiveness is only partial (as a previous chapter sought to show). Nevertheless, senior members of the community, like the middle-aged alumnae of the sorority system, act as parent substitutes to protect the interests of the group. Encroachment from outside, the introduction of heterogeneous standards, is minimised by the senior people's claim to authority over the sexual relationships of the young. Their role is seen clearly in the pattern of consultation and final celebration of the union described earlier in the chapter.

Similarities in the Jewish and Ibo patterns of control extend beyond the common feature of authoritative senior members. In the sorority the principle of matrimony is underpinned by frequent and elaborate ceremonial. As soon as an promising relationship between a sorority member and an eligible young man from the neighbouring fraternity has begun it is supported by public recognition and conventional rituals. Engagement is preceded by

'pinning' - a pre-engagement relationship signifying reciprocal commitment and sexual prerogative. 'Pinning' is solemnized by an elaborate ritual often involving the participation of many students, witnessed by all the sorority sisters and attended, in its classic form, by a choir of fraternity men singing outside the sorority.[1] There are other ways in which the status of pinned and engaged couples is ceremonially reinforced and the withdrawal from a commitment hindered.

The Ibo elders do not adopt tactics as elaborate as these. But the wedding ceremony serves to enforce the kinship ideology and values of matrimony and marital status, of seniority and collective interest. In frequent and standard ceremonies right conduct is approved. Abstention signifies disapproval and is noted by participants.

Traditional values are emphasised in the order of events and assumption of office. The office of chairman for the wedding reception, for instance, is significant. The chairman for the occasion, like the traditional go-between, is a mediator between the two parties and must balance their conflicting interests. He is literally placed between them, for on one side of the bridal party are ranged the bride's senior townspeople or relations, and other worthies (e.g. Ward Sister, first landlady) and on the other those of the groom. During an interview an elderly and respected man was asked why he had not taken the chair at his relation's wedding. He replied sternly that "people would have thought we were trying to keep it in the family" if he had done so. The chairman, he explained, has to be an impartial third party to link the two sides.

Traditional values are reflected in another piece of ceremonial. The purpose of the wedding reception, in the conventional view, is to complete the ceremony which establishes the union in customary law. For the women, who insist on a white wedding, it is felt to be essential for personal

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1, J.F.Scott (1965) p 527

status. The custom of offering money to the bridal pair as they open the dance floor brings to mind a significant aspect of the traditional going-over ceremony. In London weddings paper money is pressed to the foreheads of the couple by guests, the supporters on the bride's side leading the way. This is the London equivalent of the practice in the going-over ceremony according to which the bride's people, starting with her immediate family, press coins to her forehead as she dances, to show how highly they value her.

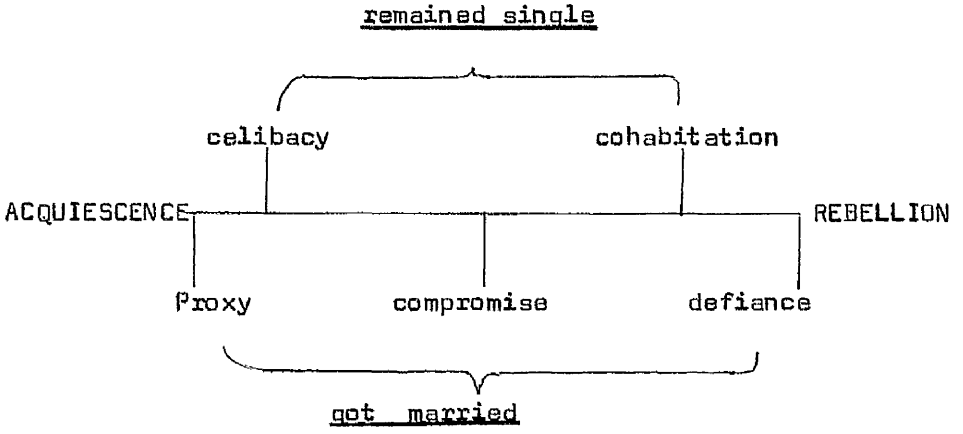
The size and exuberance of many wedding receptions brings to mind the Durkheimian notion of collective effervescence: the reaffirmation of group values which is facilitated by public ritual. The large, socially heterogenous gatherings occuring at regular intervals on a standard pattern have a cathartic effect. The values of matrimony, of collective interest and above all of the family are imparted at such gatherings.

In respect of family and community the comparison between the Ibos and the Jews may be pressed further. An historical study of upper class Jews in Britain confirms the proposition made by Gordon that Jewish religious values emphasise family and community rather than mystical experience. The point is made that conformity to the norms of "the cousinhood" - a mutual friendly society of upper class Anglo-Jews whose ties of friendship and business in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were reinforced by kinship - particularly the norm of endogamy, was induced more by the sense of 'family' than by tenets of religion. In violating those norms, two Rothschild sisters who married Gentiles were concerned more about their family's reaction than about spiritual sanctions. In the last resort family ties were strong enough to withstand the jolts of exogamy when they came, but they were the main defence against it. "It was this sense of family", says the author of the study, "continuing long after religious convictions collapsed, which helped to keep the Cousinhood Jewish."[1]

1. C.Bermant (1971) p 426

Equally, concern for family interests helps to perpetuate conventional behaviour in the Ibo community in London.

The youthful response and its consequences: summary. The youthful response to normative pressures takes a variety of forms, which reflect varying degrees of rebellion and acquiescence. Placed on a continuum of which rebellion and acquiescence are the opposite poles, the responses are as follows:



It is difficult to know precisely the distribution according to these categories, for some couples are at pains to stress consensus between themselves and their families over their marriages. Few will admit to disagreements but will maintain that approval was obtained before the wedding. Despite this uncertainty the evidence points to the majority of recent marriages in Britain falling in the 'compromise' category.

A compromise is reached in the sense that direct control or intervention is resisted, while the selected partner is not altogether unacceptable to the family. Parents are defied in theemphasis on independent selection but the criteria used by the individual do not radically conflict with those their parents would have adopted. In one case a young man whose first choice had been rejected by his parents deliberately married his second choice in London without informing them. But, he says, he sent a person

to her compound to investigate her family circumstances. He did not want to disgrace his family by marrying beneath them. He wanted a wife "whom the whole of Newi could marry", someone who would be acceptable to the whole community and hence "free to travel around".

Another more frequent form of compromise is to select a girl who is at first unacceptable but to persist in trying to obtain consent and to delay the wedding until it is forthcoming. Again, the justification is the right of the individual to choose his spouse. As one young man put it, rather irrationally, "I didn't choose my father's wife; why should he choose mine?" The individual in question obtained his father's consent, at first withheld, before marrying. He did so "for the sake of family peace". But he would have gone ahead anyway, he claims; marriage is a private concern, although family interest is involved.

The compromise situation reflects an ideological emphasis on individualism, manifested in the desire for compatibility - emotional, intellectual, educational and physical. The increasing prevalence of this requirement, expressed in the readiness to argue with parents and achieve a compromise, is supported by empirical evidence of increasing homogamy. Of the different variables - age, education, status, physical distance of hometown, religious affiliation - those relating to achievement rather than ascription are of interest here. Education is the criterion which could be expected to predominate in a situation of complete individual autonomy. The age factor is also significant by virtue of its close relationship to the level of educational attainment and the traditional expectation of a large disparity in the ages of husband and wife. The factor of propinquity, by definition an ascribed characteristic, is significant to the extent that it facilitates or impedes homogamy in other respects. Although problems of validity are created by the smallness of the sample, the often large precentage of couples for whom no data is available, and the absence of controls for the influence of intervening variables, the results of certain correlations areof interest.

TABLE 6.5 Age disparity between husband and wife by year of union. (Source: Marriage sample)

Age gap	< 1950		1951- 9		1960-5		1966-9		1970-2		D.K.		TOTAL	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
0-4 yrs	-	-	16	30	59	51	62	67	25	46	2	25	164	49
5-10	6	75	35	66	55	47	26	28	19	35	5	63	146	44
11+	2	25	-	-	1	1	5	5	10	18	-	-	18	5
D.K	-	-	2	4	1	1	-	-	1	1	1	12	5	2
TOTAL	8	100	53	100	116	100	93	100	55	100	8	100	333	100

The verticle columns indicate a falling proportion of marriages with a wide age gap until the post-war period. The trend towards age homogamy is reversed after 1970. The explanation for this lies in the number of marriages 'by proxy' occuring after the war. If proxy marriages and those where the couple met and married in Britain after 1966 are considered separately, this point is confirmed:

TABLE 6.6 Age disparity of husband and wife in marriages contracted in Britain after 1966, and proxy marriages. (source: marriage sample)

Age gap	Met and married in U.K. after 1966		Proxy marriages	
	no.	%	no.	%
0-4 years	63	68	7	28
5-10	22	24	12	48
11+	6	7	5	20
D.K.	1	1	1	4
TOTAL	92	100	25	100

A similar trend is indicated in respect of education. The trend towards homogamy is reduced in 1970. Again the reason is that proxy marriages are arranged between individuals of different ages and standards of education. The husband, already in the U.K. and often a fully qualified man in his middle or late thirties, is married to a girl in her late teens or early twenties who had received at most a secondary education.

TABLE 6.7 Educational disparity at engagement and year of marriage (Source: Marriage sample)

Educational disparity	< 1950 no.	%	1951-9 no.	%	1960-5 no.	%	1966-9 no.	%	1970-2 no.	%	D.K. no.	%	TOTAL no.	%
wife much lower[1]	1	13	4	8	5	5	7	8	6	11	1	12	24	7
wife lower	4	50	31	58	58	50	23	25	27	49	2	25	145	44
same	2	25	12	23	45	39	45	48	15	27	3	39	122	37
wife higher	-	-	2	4	4	3	13	14	7	13	1	12	27	8
D.K.	1	12	4	7	4	3	5	5	-	-	1	12	15	4
TOTAL	8	100	53	100	116	100	93	100	55	100	8	100	333	100

NOTE. 1. e.g. wife with a secondary school certificate, husband with professional qualifications or degree.

Educational disparity was reduced during the war with more marriages occurring between couples with the same level of attainment and those in which a wife was more highly qualified than her husband. In the post-war period the proportion in the 'wife higher' category remains relatively high but the proportions in the 'same' and 'lower' categories are reversed.

The tendency for well-educated women to marry less well-educated men is perhaps explained by the pressing need for women to marry, alluded to earlier (though it is inconsistent with their currently improved bargaining position). Another factor is the occasional habit of men to complete their studies by marrying a fully qualified and working wife.

The geographical proximity variable analysed in an earlier chapter supports these findings. It seems likely that disparity in one direction would be matched by congruence in another and this turns out to be the case. A large gap between home towns is matched by a congruence in the level of education and includes more couples where the wife is better qualified. Couples from the same local community include a majority of those in which the wife's educational attainment is much lower than that of her husband, a situation partly accounted for again by proxy marriages, in which common locality is a characteristic.

Proxy marriages apart, the tendency towards age and educational homogamy indicates a felt need for compatibility of certain kinds in the marital relationship. The normative explanation for compromise between the couple and their kin lies in the changing definition of conjugal roles and the scope of interest in the marriage alliance. This is consistent with the ideology of individualism to which young people are exposed in Britain and which is reinforced by their own experience of economic, physical and emotional independence. The factors of physical and emotional independence are a feature of life abroad, the economic factor a product of the war. Thus the normative explanation carries a practical counterpart in terms of changing opportunities. Men and women are brought into contact with a wider range of individuals, which facilitates homogamy. Among the enlarged circle of acquaintances peers in terms of age and education, though not in terms of ascribed status, are more readily encountered. Financial and emotional independence brings the freedom to make choices

based on personal compatibility. It also facilitates compromise with kin who are no longer in a position to apply economic and moral sanctions.

The compromise solution is adopted by the majority of couples. The other responses account for only a minority of cases. The most acquiescent response to pressure is the proxy marriage, which has already been dealt with in other contexts. Men who obtain their wives in this way comply not unwillingly with traditional marriage norms. The twenty-five cases encountered directly or indirectly involve men who desired Ibo wives but were unable to find acceptable ones among the population of Ibo girls in London. The reasons for this state of affairs are various. Most have to do with the personal characteristics of the men concerned - age, termperament and so on - often rationalised in terms of the unsuitability or available Ibo girls. The most frequent explanation offered by informants is psychological. Men account for proxy arrangements by the husband's shyness, and lack of the social skills necessary for courtship. Women refer to an 'ego problem' which produces in some men the need to dominate their wives, hence the unsuitability of girls with equivalent education and expectations based on residence abroad. The participants in proxy marriages offer an explanation in terms of the conventional role of a wife, the need to find a 'good' girl (unsophisticated and inexperienced and hence unspoiled by raised expectations) who is acceptable to their kin largely on account of her ascribed status.

The shortage of girls argument is a rationalization which nevertheless has a basis in fact, since comparatively few have arrived since the outbreak of the war. Single men are in competition for the few who remain unattached. (The apparent contradiction between this situation and that of the single Ibo girls, who experience difficulty in finding husbands, is explained by the tendency alluded to earlier for men to regard most single women as undesirable.)

A shortage of marriageable girls, though not of girls in general, lies behind another response towards theacquiescence end of the continuum. It

is a response which is as radical as that of marrying by arrangement: celibacy. This response contains an element of rebellion to the extent that alternatives may have been suggested by parents and ignored in defiance of their wishes. Celibacy is the response of men who are either attracted to unacceptable partners or are unable to find the Ibo spouse which both they and their parents desire. In the first group are men who wish to marry non-Ibos or Ibos with social stigma such as slave status. Strong opposition inhibits formalisation of the union. Suggestions from home of more eligible women known to be studying in London are pointedly rejected or simply ignored. The other group consists of men who are looking for wives, generally Ibo but occasionally outsiders, but meeting with no success. They are unwilling to enter into a proxy arrangement and remain single not in defiance of their parents but because they are unable to find girls who are acceptable to their families by virtue of their ascribed status, and compatible in intellectual and emotional terms with themselves.

Criticisms of single Ibo girls in London are expressed often most strongly by men in the celibate category. They are less likely to rationalize their celibacy in terms of a demographic shortage of Ibo girls, as do the proxy husbands, but in terms of the inadequacy of those who are available. There are, in their view, Ibo girls in abundance but their promiscuity, materialism and intellectual inferiority render them unacceptable as wives.

Men in this category include the most highly educated - university graduates and postgraduates - whose expectations of intellectual dompanionship are higher than average. They include also the first sons of wealthy families on whom the normative pressures to make politically useful alliances are strong. When a good education is combined with the status of first son in an eminent family the dilemma is acute, particularly in the post-war period when the sense of psychological and economic independence has become familiar. A return to the former relationship of authority and dependence seems outmoded, and yet the response of these young men shows

that there is little doubt where the obligation lies. Physical and emotional detachment from kin by virtue of life in Britain and the advent of the war does not lessen the sense of obligation towards parents at the expense of a newly-emerged self. An explanation for the seeming paradox may be inferred from an article by R.A.Levine. The lack of intimacy in the relationship of an Ibo student in London and his father in Nigeria, yet the persistence of obligation, is comprehensible in terms of traditional father-son relationships.

Levine's argument, briefly, is that estrangement involved in the traditional formality between fathers and sons in Africa is quite distinct from the obligations a son has towards his father.[1] Avoidance relations between them condition an individual to view intimacy and obligation as quite separate modes of behaviour. When in modern society he leaves home, receives a western education and enters the modern occupational system, his remoteness from his family, though diminishing his opportunities for intimacy with them, does little to diminish his obligation. He may indeed be saddled with many more obligations to individuals with whom he has never been intimate and may not even be a acquainted.

Obligation persists in spite of the emotional independence and absence of intimacy. Hence the potency of reproof from Nigeria. Threats and occasionally moral blackmail cause acute distress and are effective at least in terminating an undesirable relationship if they do not immediately bring about the desired alliance.

Levine's thesis may be used to account for another response to pressure: defiance. The absence of expectations of intimacy but the persistence of obligation enables theculturally estranged son to buy his way out of conflict with hisparents over cultural matters. This statement requires elaboration.

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1. R,A,Levine (1965) p 204

First, the characteristics of the defiant are outlined.

In the 'defiant' category are men and women whose romantic (and sometimes financial) attachment to an unacceptable individual causes them to defy parental opposition and contract a marriage under English law. They include first born sons of humble and occasionally of high status families, and the daughters of wealthy parents . The chosen partners who are unacceptable to parents are both black andwhite. The whites include English women met at college and through Ibo nurses at parties; and much more rarely, white men. The blacks include Ibo men and women who come from different socio-cultural areas and hence are married in breach of a norm of area endogamy. In three cases marriages were made between Onitsha town people and others from the Ibo hinterland, and in the the face of keen opposition. Other Ibos are unacceptable on account of a combination of stigma, such as divorced status, membership of a different ethnic group, unfavourable age and the possession of illegitimate children. In this group is a West Indian divorcee who was older than her Ibo husband and already had a ten year old son.

The causes of defiance can be found again in norms and opportunities. The absence of constraint in the London environment coupled with personal p reference for a relationship which satisfies personal as opposed to family requirements, produce it. Economic and emotional self-sufficiency reduces the force of parental sanctions. Invariably however such marriages are entered into on the assumption that reconciliation will come in the end. Parents will relent with thepassage of time, the birth of children, and the domonstration of worth by the wife. The assumption is made more freely by men whose bright economic prospects in relation to their humble backgrounds improve their bargaining position. Low status parents - farmers and small traders - have more to gain in the way of prestige and material improvement and are more susceptible to arguments in favour of a foreign or otherwise unacceptable wife. It may be simply a case of deferring to

their more 'civilised' son's savoire faire, as one young man preferred to think. If this is so, 'defiance' is hardly the appropriate term to use. Generally, however, the marriage takes place in a climate of forceful opposition which only later gives way and, as we shall see shortly, may not give way at all. The deference of 'uncivilised' parents towards their western-educated son, largely in response to the reality that without him they are nothing, recalls Levine's hypothesis that the traditional lack of intimacy minimises intergenerational tension over cultural/dissimilarities. Conflict over differing cultural standards is mitigated by the emphasis on obligation rather than intimacy. The uneducated rural parent whose successful westernized son recognises his duty to give financial aid to family members and exert influence on their behalf makes relatively little protest over the son's radically different way of life. Whether or not the educated elite can buy their way out of a conflict situation involving family interests to the extent that marriage does is not indicated by Levine. The evidence of Ibo informants suggests that they can.

The fifth and final response to pressures from the senior members of the group is cohabitation. This response, like the previous one, is located towards the rebellion end of the spectrum. However, couples here stop short of marriage and remain, like those in the category of celibates, single. Cohabitation contains an element of acquiescence just as celibacy has its rebellious aspect. Men and women who cohabit when they really wish to marry are complying with parents' demands that they do not contract an unacceptable alliance. Often it is the intention of one partner to marry, and eventual marriage a condition on which the arrangement was founded. Such was Ngozi's hope in the case quoted earlier in the chapter. It is indeed the eventual outcome of many liaisons. Cohabitation may thus be an intermediate phase leading to a marriage for which the parents' grudging approval is finally obtained. In other cases cohabitation is virtually a business arrangement between a man who has no intention of marriage and a woman who is prepared

to do without it. Although ostensibly it is founded on love and meets the emotional needs of the couple its basis is economic. As such it is peculiar to the war and post-war periods in the majority of cases.

The five responses - proxy marriage, celibacy, a compromise situation, cohabitation and defiance of parents' wishes - meet with varying degrees of success. Some marriages in a particular category achieve a more favourable outcome than others. Thus some proxy marriages break down while others achieve adjustment to the satisfaction of all concerned. Some couples who defy their kin suffer unhappiness and argument; others achieve reconciliation. Precise figures are hard to obtain, for data is often not available on the true situation and it is inmany cases too soon to tell the outcome of marriages made in recent years.

Most marriages are stable, not only because the partners are broadly compatible but because external forces contrive to minimise internal differences and bolster the marriage in ways outlined in the previous chapter. Unstable marriages tend, predictably, to fall into the 'proxy' and 'defiance' categories - extremes on the continuum.

It is perhaps surprising that proxy marriages fail in view of their conformity to customary requirements and the institutional support provided by the upholders of custom and defenders of the collective interest - kin and senior members of the community. At the same time, in the light of contemporary social and economic circumstances it is remarkable that any at all survive. The following case throws into relief the contradiction between expectations based on custom and the circumstances of proxy marriages. Its outcome is typical of many.

In 1971 a marriage was arranged between a young man and a girl, the latter having been brought up in Ghana where both their families had

migrated to trade. The two families in the Ibo migrant community arranged the match and the girl was sent to Britain by the Husband's brothers in 1971 to marry. She remained with him for only four weeks before fleeing in distress. They had no knowledge of understanding of each other and there was clear evidence of physical ill-treatment by the husband. From the various accounts which can be pieced together it appears that the girl was found wandering in the street by a Yoruba woman who contacted some Ibo friends. The girl was put in touch with her townspeople who took her in and upbraided her husband for ill-treating her. He did not, however, go to claim her and state his case in the traditional way but approached her helpers indirectly through his brothers in Ghana and their town union there. This delayed negotiation to a point where court action was unavoidable.

Certain events preceded this stage, however. The President of the girl's local union in London (a different one from her husband's) decided to take up her case. Not only was he impressed by her state of shock and the evidence of injuries received at the hands of her husband, but he knew her family in Ghana and felt obliged to assist their daughter who was in obvious need. He called on the union executive to help but they delayed, and as Jenny was now an illegal immigrant (having failed to marry her fiance) and in danger of being deported he took up the case himself. The girl wrote home to her father in Ghana who intered into correspondence with the union president in London. The husband's two brothers, who had arranged the marriage, also wrote to him using the medium of their own town union in Ghana.

The husband informed the police of Jenny's illegal presence in the country and they arrested her in the President's flat, where she was staying. Legal action was unavoidable. The President had in any case abandonned hope of a settlement by traditional means (i.e. out of court). His observations of Jenny during the period of her stay suggested that there was no point in trying to make the marriage work. Her conduct and lack of common sense led

him to the conclusion that she was a bad girl who had used her husband in order to get to Britain. He told the man so and advised him not to persist with her.

This well-intentioned advice led to a bitter exchange. The husband accused the president of stealing his wife. The latter retorted that she was not worth it and that if he had wanted another woman he would have found one his wife would not have been ashamed to see.(i.e. a wife would be more humiliated by her husband's unfaithfulness if he rejected her for an inferior woman but a superior one would not reflect so badly on her.) The husband's people in London joined him in accusing the president of "taking someone else's wife" and even of using her to obtain money. Other unpleasantness followed, leading to the avoidance by the president of the husband's people in London. This meant abstaining from weddings and other public celebrations where they would be in force, and where the husband'S solicitor, a townsman, would be waiting to interview him.

Although, through the president's efforts, the court case was won and the girl permitted to stay in Britain, his attitude twards her has not changed. In his view she is a bad girl. The whole affair would never have happened if she had been born and brought up in her home town in Iboland. But she grew up in a Ghanaian city, and behaves accordingly.

This case illustrates the potential instability of marriages founded on ignorance of a partner. In this case the structural weakness became apparent as soon as the young wife arrived, and attempts by local people to settle the affair on the couple's behalf were soon abandonned. In other cases wives simply disappear soon after arrival.

Not all proxy arrangements end this way, however. There are a few which occurred between 1965 and 1969 which have remained intact after several years of trial, and are to all appearances successful Initialdisappointments are overcome and increasing familiarity, together with the knowledge that

breakdown will have repercussions beyond the couple themselves, keep the marriage intact. The birth of children and the achievement of other goals - qualifications, an adequate income - minimise the strains attendant upon this type of arrangement. The failure to achieve culturally defined goals exposes and exaccerbates them.

Marriages contracted in defianceof kin bring unhappiness in some cases and reconciliation in others. Unhappiness born of underlying tension exists when recognition of a foreign wife is persistently withheld. A young man whose attachment to his English wife was founded both on intellectual compatibility and practical indebtedness (she was financing his full-time study and maintaining the household unaided) was caused acute embarrassment when a senior and much respected relation on a visit to London pointedly ignored her. On being introduced he declared with great emphasis and in the full hearing of the company, " X is not married. If he had been, I would be the first to know." Other couples whose marital relationship remains strong are denied complete satisfaction by the continuing disapproval of their kin. Disapproval by the girl's family means rejection, for the benefits which accrue to them from her marriage are not sufficient to bring a change of heart. The husband's situation is more favourable to a change of heart in his family. The advantages of children and prestige for which the husband's family are dependent on him turn initial rejection into grudging acceptance. The wife lacks her husband's good bargaining position in relation to her own people.

The disapproval has more serious consequences for a woman than for a man. The denial of approval means a lack of security, both physical and emotional, and a loss of status. A girl who is acceptable to her husband's family can rely on the menfolk to defend her interests and call her husband to account if he ill-treats "our wife". She must take her own family's wishes into account too, for she expects to return home if anything goes wrong with her

marriage . If she paid no attention to their wishes in the first place "they would tell her that, since she gave herself away, she has no right to come back."

Traditionally, for a man too the absence of support is serious. It means losing privileges he and his children would normally enjoy among his wife's people, and a loss of moral and material support from his own. A man needs the approval of his in-laws so that he can call upon them to control his wife if she disobeys him. She cannot automatically expect their support against him, for they have an interest in keeping thecouple together. Marital breakdown involves a breach between a wide set of relations and the termination of reciprocal services. A man who marries without the approval of his family risks ostracism for the shame he has brought upon them. This is a situation to be avoided for whateverthe short-term gains of marrying the girl of his choice, in the long-run he will regret his action. For he wants to return among them. He requires their help in celebrating the birth of a child, or a child's wedding, in arranging a funeral and in surviving a financial crisis. If he has political ambitions either for traditional office or in modern party politics the support of agnatic and affinal kin is vital.

Thus disapproval cannot be ignored. The striving for reconciliation goes on and casts a shadow on the marriage which may have repercussions in the marital relationship. The knowledge of family displeasure continually undermines a relationship which was perhaps entered into reluctantly by one partner. Resentment of the spouse leads to constant quarrels and recriminations.

In certain circumstances the desired reconciliation is procured. Prejudice against foreign wives is worn down as their stability and good intentions become apparent. The husband who remarks with pride that his English wife now has more friends at home than he has (acquired by correspondence) is not uncommon. Nor is the American wife whose generosity to her husband's family soon won their admiration and respect. Her frequent gifts of money

and goods brought a letter from her husband's father's brother which said, "We were unhappy when you married M. But now that we see how good she is, we wonder if there are any more in her family whom we can marry?" An Ibo couple whose London wedding in 1971 drew only limited support from senior relations on both sides are now fully restored in their favour after the birth of a son. Having stayed away from the ceremony and avoided the couple since, friendly relations were resumed on the baby's arrival since this was a major achievement for the husband's descent group and bound the couple, and through them their respective families, more closely together.

Thus the future of marriages made in defiance of customary requirements or, for the sake of tradition, in disregard of the requirements of life in Britain, are unpredictable. Failure or success, unhappiness or reconciliation, depend on the structural circumstances of the couple, the presence or absence of support from kin, the birth of children and other achievements. Compromise and acquiescence are the dominant responses to pressure. "Wrong" marriages are seen to fail, and the norms of the ascriptive group are thus reaffirmed.

Conclusion. Most individuals compromise with their parents in the choice of a partner, both because they subscribe to the values of the group, and because they fear the consequences of defiance. These are the withdrawal of support, tension in the marriage and eventual breakdown. The failure rate of couples who marry in defiance of social pressures is increased by those very pressures. It is at the same time exaggerated in the popular imagination. The first point may be clarified by returning to the Jewish analogy.

The stability of interfaith marriages in America is jeopardised by the forces which aim to prevent them in the first place. The gloomy predictions of priests and rabbis turn into self-fulfilling prophecies. Rabbi Gordon and others argue that intermarriages should be avoided because they are unstable. Instability is attributed to the lack of religious communion between the parents and of religious identity in the children. The conservative

premise on which this argument is based is that a religious identity is indispensible, a basic social and psychological prerequisite for healthy adulthood. For this, however, there is no independent evidence, hence no justification. In the Ibo case, equally, the result of the pressure which is brought to bear on undesirable unions - termination - merely confirms the prediction of their detractors that such marriages cannot last. Such marriages fail where others succeed not because of any intrinsic weakness but because the customary external supports are withdrawn. Assistance is deliberately witheld and the effect is calculated to deter others from embarking on the same course.

Not only is the failure rate of deviant relationships comparatively high. It is exaggerated in popular imagination and hence becomes an instrument of social control to deter potential deviants. The effect of the breakdown - real or imagined - of undesirable marriages and liaisons is similar to the effect of compromise and conformity to expectations: the values of the group are reaffirmed and its boundaries thus reinforced. The procedure resembles that encountered in the discussion ofconjugal roles and marital breakdown in the last chapter. A deviant wife was made a scapegoat to emphasise the wrongness of her action in going to court, and the rightness of traditional methods of reconciliation.

Relations and townspeople assume authority in new marriages as a traditionally sanctioned right. Senior relations not only expect to negotiate on behalf of young female kin but insist on reciprocal arrangements on the young man's side. The traditional values of seniority and collective interest are thus reaffirmed. Disapproval on traditional grounds is expressed by the refusal of token gifts and abstention from the wedding ceremony. Approval of "right" conduct is expressed by full participation in the tradition of London Ibo weddings: membership of the platform party, and conventional speedhes about the couple and the significance of the union for

themselves and for their local communities.

Group norms are upheld through unfavourable comparisons with the marriage norms of the host society. The supposed tendency of English couples to meet casually and marry after a brief and superficial acquaintance is held up as an example of what Ibo marriage practices are not.

Efforts to control marital selection by the elders are justified by the expetation that they will eventually return home and be held accountable for errors committed by the young. Explanation at a different level exists in the hypothesis alluded to in the last chapter concerning control over the termination of unsatisfactory marriages. Control is bound up with the traditional authority structure of the group and must be maintained if the group is to continue in the same form. The objective explanation for the attempt to retain control is found in the character of the group as an ethnic minority in an alien environment. Its strength and distinctiveness are constantly threatened by contact with non-members and exposure to heterogeneous standards of behaviour.

By channelling youthful activities in a particular direction the senior members of the group retain its cultural homogeneity. Standards are kept undiluted and values perpetuated. Furthermore the survival of the group is directly influenced by control over this area of social organisation. The survival of the group depends on the continuing recruitment of the offspring of marriages. Physical survival is aided also by cultural differentiation. Marriage norms, to repeat the point made in the last chapter, are a principle distinguishing feature of the Ibo community. Through patterns of behaviour in the sphere of kinship and marriage an economically incorporated group is culturally differentiated.

Alternative participant models, discussed here as 'deviant' and 'conventional', are noted and used by the actors. The very awareness of alternatives keeps alive ethnic consciousness. However, conflicting definitions of the situation, reflected in unconventional behaviour, cannot be tolerated beyond a certain point. In the interests of the group a dominant ideology is upheld, and

and activated by frequent ceremonial. The theoretical importance of the engagement party and wedding ceremony and reception, for instance, lies in their capacity to express and promote group values and hence ensure its continued existence as a separate entity.

The creation of new families is central to the survival of an ascriptive group. Since membership is by familial ascription recruitment is guaranteed only by channelling the marital choices of the younger generation in the direction of ethnic particularism. Hence the emphasis on 'right' choice, 'correct' procedure, and 'good' conduct once marriage has been accomplished.

CHAPTER SEVEN.

Conclusion.

Summary. In the course of the thesis certain facts about the Ibos have emerged, concerning their objective characteristics, life-styles and patterns of association. It has been seen that there are almost three thousand Ibos in London, with men outnumbering women in the ratio of three to two. They tend to be between twenty-five and forty years old and to have been in Britain for between five and ten years. The majority came to study, in order to improve their status in Nigeria. But the Nigeria-Biafra War interupted the process and as a result they are still here. Most are engaged in some form of economic activity which involves them in daily interaction with members of the host society. They are unevenly dispersed throughatthe Greater London area, with minor concentrations north and south of the Thames, and do not therefore constitute a clearly defined geographical unit.

The Ibos have been in theirpresent environment for a number of years and are physically dispersed, both factors conducive to integration in the host society. As students they have come into contact with members of the non-Ibo population. They have been exposed to the normative influences of the host society and the universalistic influences of higher education. As workers, again, they have experienced integration, but in doing so have encountered problems likely to reinforce their sense of a separate identity. A consequence of economic integration has been the attainment of financial independence from the people at home and, in consequence of that, a lessening of social constraint exercised by them or on their behalf.

The awareness of a common identity based on language, descent and locality is strong, but the intensity of interaction which was evident in the war years is lacking. Individual networks are generally loose-knit, and multiplex relationships the exception rather than the rule. Nevertheless,

a common identity based on descent, socio-cultural affinity and a community of interests in Britain persists. Despite the introduction of status categories and patterns of association resembling those of the host society, ethnic particularism persists in certain institutional spheres. Activities associated with kinship and marriage, particularly, reveal adherence to group norms which are, in theory and to an extent in practice, rooted in traditional forms of organisation.

Interaction with other ethic groups, either black minorities or whites, takes a variety of forms. In respect of some activities the boundaries between the Ibos and non-Ibos is clear cut. Interaction with the English occurs in the workplace and other structured situations (e.g. landlord-tenant relations, college lecturer-student relations) but with the exception of heterosexual relationships, which sometimes result in marriage, interaction tends not to occur in the diffuse areas of marriage, kinship and friendship. Occasionally a fellow tenant or class-mate is also a friend, but relationships with the English tend to be specific and instrumental.

Members of certain other ethnic minorities, Indians, Nigerians and West Indians, for instance, occupy different positions in relation to the Ibos. In some situations they are fellow blacks, fellow students or fellow Nigerians.[1] In others they are 'those Yorubas' or 'those Asians...' As fellow blacks, West African, West Indian and Asian students sometimes sink their differences to assert their common interests. Formal interaction between Ibos and other Nigerian groups took place until 1966 in the context of student organisations like the West African Students' Union. They mixed informally also under the auspices of the British Council and other social clubs, as class mates and as fellow tenants. Occasionally they intermarried.

1, For instance, blackness is used to limit friction in situations involving white women. Helen Kanitkar (1970) describes an incident between an Indian and a Nigerian over a white girl. The Indian ordered the other to 'leave my girlfriend alone.' The Nigerian suggested that as black people they should not quarrel over a white girl. p 18

Multiplex relationships occur with certain categories in particular, as for instance with Yoruba men and West Indian women. Interaction with Yorubas has become attenuated since 1966 but still persists between former colleagues, class-mates and co-tenants. Interaction with West Indian women has if anything increased in recent years, culminating in marriage in many cases.

In the account of the social structure of the community, time has emerged as a factor in the pattern of association. Relationships within the group changed from the 1950s when, it is said, everyone knew everyone else and the population was relatively undifferentiated, to the early 1960s when the number and composition of the student body developed. Another change occurred after 1967, when interaction was intensified in the group and the basis for association expanded. The structure of relationships changed yet again at the termination of the war in 1970. though some of the links established in the preceeding period continued to flourish.

Internal changes are matched by changes in relationships between Ibos and non-Ibos. The boundaries of the group, which had been only loosely drawn in the 1950s, became clearer in the 1960s as the size and circumstances of the population altered. The advent of the war effectively halted interaction between Ibos and other Nigerians for the majority of people, though with other groups they continued to interact on the same specific and instrumental basis.

The boundaries of the group changed, then, in response to changing circumstances. Internal changes, too, reflected the same pressures. Demographic, social, political, legal and economic factors influenced the pattern of interaction among the Ibos. The changing circumstances of the war years saw a changing emphasis on certain types of relationship - kinship and local ties, friendship and marriage. Involvement in the economic sector during the war and after it helped to narrow the range of

interaction thorugh the tendency towards 'homecentredness' while establishing new bas for association. Thus the marriage of Michael and Angela, mentioned in the General Introduction, occurred in a climete of changing needs and expectations.

The central concern of the thesis has been the relationship between activities associated with kinship and marriage, and the economic and political circumstances of the Ibos. This approach rests on the assumption that the social process is essentially a process of interaction between strucutral and symbolic variables, and that the interplay should be the focal point in an analysis of social organisation.

In order to understand the pattern of continuity and change it has been necessary to examine the interaction of structural and symbolic variables in three historical periods, coinciding with major political and economic developments. Against the background of structural change, the aim has been to identify and analyse concommitant changes in the sphere of symbolic action. A brief recapitulation of the different stages is necessary before conclusions are drawn as to the efficacy of the model in the Ibo case, and the effect of the interplay of variables on the unity and persistence of the group.

In the early stages the Ibos were a student community. The first period began with the migration of the first generation of students and would-be students after the first world war and ended with the outbreak of hostilities in Nigeria in 1966. During that time Ibos migrated in increasing numbers in the quest for qualifications, the "golden fleece" which would bring them fame and fortune on their return to Nigeria. They were physically dispersed and in terms of interaction did not form a clearly bounded social unit. Informal relationships occurred between Ibo fellow students. Interaction with non-students was limited by the system of status differentiation which put workers and part-time students at a disadvantage. In the early stages no institutional arrangements existed to draw the different categories of Ibo migrants into interaction, such as the voluntary associations based on community of origin which emerge towards the end of the

period. The emergence of these organisations coincided with (and in consequence of) political development in Nigeria and the growing number of Ibo residents in Britain whose welfare and recreational needs they helped to meet.

The comradeship which students enjoyed in the context of the British Council and other student welfare organisations was extended to other West African students with whom the Ibos had common political and cultural interests. Prior to national independence these links were strong. Similar relations with other black minority groups did not exist. No common interests joined Ibo students to West Indian immigrants since their background and aspirations were quite different.

The reference group of the Ibo students was provided by their kin in Nigeria, and by the community of 'been-tos', the western educated elite who travelled to the U.K, before them and set the pace for aspirations and achievement. In the early period the Ibo population, while not constituting a clearly defined unit was only marginally incorporated in the host society. Interaction with whites was confined largely to structured situations concerning education and housing. Informal interaction was restricted to liaisons with white women which occasionally resulted in marriage and incorporation of the latter in the Ibo group. On the whole, however, the heterosexual relationships of the students was constrained by existing arrangements to marry local Ibo girls. Men who arrived unattached were constrained by the expectation that they would return to marry.

Incorporation in the economic institutions of the wider society was minimal in the student population, though part-time students and wives of full-time students entered into employment in order to achieve the goal which had prompted their migration. Despite the presence of wives and, occasionally, small children, the student character of the community remained dominant. Family life was limited by the priority given to study, the shortage of money to invest in accommodation, the limited duration of stay, the inconvenience of children,

The population was culturally distinguished from the host society (though not from other West African students) by the role and subculture of the foreign student. The life style and reference group reflected precise and limited objectives which were, by and large, successfully achieved.

With the outbreak of war and the termination of financial assistance from home a radical change took place. It became respectable to earn a living, and both workers and students interacted in the forum of local and national Biafran organisations. Despite economic incorporation and the temporary breakdown of communications with kin, the degree of commitment to Ibo interests in Nigeria did not decline, Political unification took place in a kinship idiom, which operated also to regulate interpersonal relations at a local level. Biafran interests were seen to conflict with those of the host society, and as the structural position of Biafrans was more sharply defined in opposition to those of non-Biafrans, so the external boundaries of the group were more clearly drawn and internal barriers were modified. New associations were born which cut across local ties. Marital choice reflected the same tendency to cross social boundaries.

In view of the newly emerged collective interests a means of emphasising cultural distinctiveness was called for. Economic incorporation threatened the authority of the group. Equally, economic independence from kin meant the absence of economic sanctions and moral pressure exercised by them to enforce conformity with group norms. It called for stricter controls on the activities of members of the group lest its distinctiveness be undermined by the introduction of heterogeneous standards of behaviour. Despite the existence of normative controls violations occurred in respect of marital choice, procedure in contracting the union and the conduct of marital affairs. Thus some marriages involved partners outside the conventionally defined circle of eligible spouses. Some unions were contracted without due consultation with senior members of the group. Some matrimonial disputes were exposed to outsiders and ended in marital

breakdown. But adherence to customary requirements was observed in the majority of cases. Individuals selected acceptable spouses, Attempts were made to reconcile married couples in dispute. The period was characterised by an intensity of interaction among Ibos, born of the threat to common interests.

By the end of the war the community had acquired an air of permanence, notwithstanding the renewal of contact with home, the trips to Nigeria to "see how things stand", and permanent departures for home by people with good prospects. Couples are now physically dispersed and economically independent. They enjoy considerable autonomy in their domestic affairs. Most people continue in full-time employment, and the product is used to acquire cars and houses, the new status symbols.

An emergent status system no longer reflects so accurately the social situation in Nigeria. It indicates a change of reference group from kin in Nigeria to peers and co-ethnics in Britain.

The termination of hostilities in Nigeria, together with the retention of economic independence, has produced a decline in collective interests, Private economic activity takes the form of paid employment, of independent business ventures, and of investment in property and other items of material and social value. Private interests are promoted in legal disputes with Ibo landlords, tenants and business partners when the need arises. Dependence of kin is reduced by private insurance schemes and other forms of self help.

But identification with the group overrides private conflicts of interest. Traditional rights and obligations are recognised on occasions when wronged individuals appeal to fellow members of the group. The attempt is invariably made to settle a financial dispute internally before adopting the remedy of court action. Local communities gather for social activities at fixed intervals. Above all, an interest is taken in domestic affairs and heterosexual relationships when these threaten to undermine the standards of the group.

In several respects the community has come to resemble other groups of expatriate Ibos. The change in circumstances has transformed it from a community of students into one of workers. Their position in the host society is less marginal though the group is far from losing its separate identity. It is fruitful to digress for a moment into the tradition of Ibo migration and the development of migrant communities, in order to place the contemporary phenomenon in perspective.

The Ibo Diaspora. Since the process of migration is closely related to the growth of urban centres in West Africa, it is necessary to begin with a brief account of this phenomenon.

The principal towns of Eastern Nigeria are, it has been suggested, modern creations. They are new, non-rural communities which have emerged "beyond the horizons of the villages over the last half-century".[1] Enugu and other townships remained until 1960 mainly administrative and commercial centres, the majority of urban residents consisting of government officials, the police, traders and teachers. Since then industrial developments have increased the activities of the urban population, and the size of the population has grown accordingly.[2] Onitsha, for instance, grew from 76,000 in 1953 to 163,000 ten years later.[3]

The drift to the townships began in the early 1900s, and accelerated gradually. Men forced off the land by over population in such areas as Orlu and Owerri were attracted by the promise of trade or wage labour.[4] School leavers and christian converts travelled to the towns in search of office jobs which were not available in the countryside.[5]

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1. Floyd(1969)p 63, 49. 2. Ibid. 3. Moller(1968) p 221.

4. The migration for work was not altogether a modern phenomenon. See R. Udo (1964). An informant in London described how her father, and other wealthy farmers, used to employ small bands of roving farm labourers.

5. The great upheavals in the early part of the century are seen thorugh the eyes of participants like D.Okafor-Omali (1965), Mbonu Ojike(1955) and novelists like Chinua Achebe. The anthropological material on the period is sparse. Anthropologists in the field during that time were specifically concerned with traditional customs. Basden disposed of the new phenomenon in the preface of his study(1935). M.M. Green deliberately chose a backwater in which 'the essential features of social organisation' would be visible, undisturbed by European contact.

Ibos travelled beyond Ibo land in their search for prosperity, and they went in considerable numbers. In the eastern region they settled in Calabar, Bonny and Uyo. In Western Nigeria communities grew up in Ibadan and Lagos, Warri, Sapele and Benin-City. In the north Ibos settled in Kano, Zaria, Jos and Kaduna.[1]

In Ghana they were employed in the goldmines, in labouring and domestic services and in skilled work with contractors. It was observed that 'where a living can be made, and preferably where there are a few people from the same town, there they will go.'[2]

The numbers of Ibos outside Iboland are not known precisely. Farde and Jones, quoting official estimates, state that there were in 1921 2,666 Ibos in Northern Nigeria, and 11,796 in 1931.[3] The community of Western Ibos in Ibadan had a population of between 2,000 and 2,800 in 1966[4] (of which three of the oldest residents had been in continuous occupation since 1925). Lagos, probably contained many more at that time. An estimated 1.8 million Ibos returned to the East from various parts of the federation in 1967.

An Ibo sociologist refers to "Ibo subsystems developing within the complexes of big cities all round the world." There are, he claims, Ibo <u>emigré</u> communities in London, Paris, New York and Washington, Ottowa, Dar-es-Salam, Lusaka and Blantyre, Abijan, Peking and Moscow.[5]

The journey to London, although it was motivated primarily by the wish to study, may be seen as part of a tradition of migration in search of economic opportunity. For many Ibos in London, such movement is not a new experience but part of an established way of life. (30% of the 268 individuals for whom information was obtained were born and brought up in a migrant community). Indeed, since the war the occupational structure of the London community and others in the industrial countries have come to resemble those of their

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1. U. Okonjo (1970) p.74.
2. B.B. Stapleton (1959).
3. Farde and Jones (1950) p. 10.
4. C. Okonjo (1966) p. 99.
5. O. Madu, 'The Times', London (1971).

counterparts in Africa. They are now not just student communities but include workers responding to economic opportunities in the manner of settlers in various parts of West Africa.

If the objective characteristics of the Ibos in London resemble those of other Ibo expatriate communities, so does their ideological commitments to "the Ibo way of life". The various accounts of the urban experience of Ibo migrants to the growing cities of the Eastern region of Nigeria make two points clear. Individuals from the same home town are drawn together in the city; and the basis of their association is their community of origin. Thus "fifty years after Port Harcourt's inception there is still no 'second generation' Port Harcourt resident."[1] The Owerri traders and Onitsha civil servants in the city are tied to their communities of origin, physically and psychologically, by the extended family, home town visiting, and community associations devoted to the formulation and execution of rural development schemes.

The most organised expression of communal sentiments in urban communities are ethnic associations. But informal organisation, too, reflects the same principle. Ethnic ties are manipulated for the purpose of finding accommodation and jobs. They are seen in the choice of friends and in political activities. Most interesting for the present purpose, they operate in the choice of a spouse. Of second generation Western Ibos in Ibadan, C. Okonjo has this to say: "Born and bred in Ibadan, they are all bilingual, speaking Yoruba without an accent. Their playmates are Yoruba. The very young ones, in fact, after their first visits to their parents' hometown, come back to deride it as being backward, with no electricity and water supplies. It is only later in life that the prejudices begin to take root. Stereotyped ideas of their hosts develop and the majority end up by marrying from the Western group of Ibos in Ibadan or from elsewhere."[2]

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1. H. Wolpe (1967).

2. C. Okonjo (1967) p 111

The degree of autonomy observed in the Ibadan population, their economic incorporation yet cultural distinctiveness, are evident in the Ibo community in London as well. Again, the institutional mechanisms for safeguarding the unity and distinctiveness of the group devolve on kinship and marriage.

The institutions of kinship and marriage have operated in a variety of ways to define right relationships between members of the community and between Ibos and non-Ibos. Kinship, as a symbolic statement about the rights and obligations between members of the same descent group, is used to mobilise support in time of crisis, and emphasise the shared identity of Ibos born of their common interests. Before the war, when collective interests were less clearly defined, kinship operated minimally to regulate relationships between Ibos of different status categories. During the crisis, when external pressures produced a closing of the ranks against outsiders individuals of different status groups were united on a basis of kinship. Kinship provided the basis for the institutional expression of Biafran interests. Formal organisations - the Biafra Divisional Assembly, the town union infra-structure - were set up on the basis of the existing institutional structure of local communities. The ideology of kinship was used to mobilise support for the war effort. The moral imperative of kinship ties discouraged failure to participate.

After the war the pressure from outside which threatened individual and collective interests is reduced. Formal organisation which in the name of kinship effectively unified the population during the war disappear almost overnight. Kinship symbols have lost some of their potency. They are no longer sufficient to restrain individuals from exposing internal disputes to outsiders. Court action is embarked upon in furtherance of individual interests. But kinship still regulates relations between fellow Ibos to the extent that informal interaction occurs on a local basis, and that distinctions are drawn subjectively between the members of the group and outsiders whose life style and conduct are held up as different and inferior. The persistence of kinship as a mobilising

force at the ideological and behavioural level is paralelled in the related institution of marriage.

As a means for the establishment of new families and the strengthening of existing ones, marriage is of central concern to kin groups. Concern with heterosexual relationships among the young is pronounced where membership of a group is by familial ascription and where a kinship ideology obtains. Both of these conditions obtain for the Ibo community.

Thus where possible, senior members of the ascriptive group uphold marriage norms and influence marital practice. They are concerned with two issues: the persistence of existing marriages established by acceptable (ie. traditional) criteria; and the arrangement of new marriages. The former involves controlling the expression of dissatisfaction by the partners, and resolving disputes by traditional means. The latter involves the application of moral sanctions to restrict heterosexual relations within the circle of eligible spouses and the encouragement of permanent unions in accordance with group norms. The involvement of senior members and co-ethnics is justified by reference to collective interest. Marriage is a matter of common concern. The collective interests served in marriage are those of the descent group which at its broadest is defined to include the whole of the ethnic group. The protection of collective interests is vested in the elders[1] on account of their seniority and the tendency of the young to ignore ascribed status in the process of mate selection.

Symbolic action promotes the interest of the group on two levels: ideological, and behavioural. A kinship ideology and an ideology of marriage promotes cultural distinctiveness. Translated into patterns of behaviour they control recruitment to the group. Since membership is by familial ascription the founding of new families whose offspring have undivided loyalties, and the persistence of existing

1. Although the senior members of the group are in early middle age, they are by their own and others' reckoning, 'elders'. Age is a relative concept.

family units, are of vital importance. Marital stability, and the desires of the young which may threaten the interests of the group by following anti-particularistic tendencies, must be controlled.

Thus symbolic structures serve to promote and articulate political interests. In considering the process of articulation the question arises as to why kinship is prominent over other forms of symbolic action. The choice of articulating principle depends on the existing institutional framework. Genealogy, it has been argued, was a structuring principle in traditional Ibo society. As such it provides a ready means for mobilising support for a common cause and an effective sanction against violations of group norms. In an ascriptive group obligations to kin assume special significance. In this (the Ibo) case a traditional relationship between kinship and collective interest - the relevant collectivity being the descent group - comes into operation in new structural circumstances to ensure the continuity of the group.

The final question for consideration concerns the future. In terms of the argument advanced so far, one would expect the decline of collective interest to be marked by a further weakening in the strength of kinship ties, real and fictive, and in the prescriptions for marriage. Incorporation on one level does not, however, mean total assimilation. Just as, before the war, the Ibadan Ibos were economically incorporated but culturally differentiated from their Yoruba hosts, so the London Ibos may retain their economic interests in Britain without becoming British. In the event of another real or perceived threat to their collective interests the traditional symbolic principles can be expected to reassert themselves to strengthen the unity of the group.

The interests of the group are both objective and subjective. Objective interests are those of the group as a whole, and the structural position of individual members. Subjective interests include the advantages and disadvantages of remaining in Britain, as perceived by the actors.

The subjective definition of the situation indicates a conflict which is generally resolved in favour of returning to Nigeria, either immediately or at some future date. There are several advantages in remaining in Britain. Men are attracted by jobs, women by work and social security in the absence of a husband. The children's education is an important consideration. Freedom from pressing demands from kin is another factor which may influence the choice between going home and remaining in Britain. Against these advantages must be balanced discrimination in residential, occupational and recreational spheres, which militates against identification with the wider society and the adoption of its values. Inability to achieve recognition and influence in terms of the dominant ethos of the host society, together with the emotional poverty of life in a Western industrial metropolis where the Ibos are physically dispersed and socially isolated, enhances the attraction of returning to Nigeria. The idea of the homeland, of reunion with families, of attaining social status and acceptance on their own terms, reinforces in most Ibos the intention to return. There are also the pressures and expectations of kin to contend with. An important factor in the situation is the obligation to restore the declining fortunes of of families who financed the trip abroad, and issued instructions to "go and return". It explains the increasing rate of return among those who are in a position to go since they have achieved the goal for which they came.

If the rate of return is rapid for the elite, the non-elite are faced with special problems which prolong their stay in Britain. Perpetual students are in a dilemma which does not diminish with the passage of time. The atmosphere of permanence is strongest in the section of the community whose objective circumstances closely resemble those of the indigeneous lower middle or working classes. It includes families with school-age children whose fathers, approaching middle age, are after many years of residence in Britain engaged full-time in semi-skilled manual or routine white-collar employment. Studies have either been

abandoned or resumed on a part-time basis which offers little hope of rapid completion and a speedy return to Nigeria.

With the decline in collective interests and the intensity of interaction whcih characterised the war years, structural differences are emerging within the Ibo community. Differences in life chances take on a class character. The elite qualify and return at an increasing rate. The non-elite are caught in a vicious circle of failure which makes the return home an often unattainable dream.

Nonetheless, relations with fellow Ibos are stronger than those with non - Ibos, in most spheres of interaction. Class interests override ethnic interests only to a limited extend, On the whole, ethnic categories of identification and action are operative. The potential for collective action in defence of common interests is as powerful in the present period as it has been in the past.

The strength of ethnic ties depends on the authority of senior members of the group to enforce sanctions and thereby ensure conformity; on the existence of an ideology which regulates action and relationships; and above all on the existence of common interests on account of which the ideology is activated.

The question of return to Nigeria is in a sense immaterial to the continued existence of the Ibo community as a separate entity. The premise of the thesis has been that a minority group expresses its interests symbolically and in that way perpetuates itself in changing circumstances. The ideological importance of ethnic identity, defined in terms of kinship, religious affiliation or other symbolic principle, exists regardless of any real or practical interest in the community of origin. It simply provides a means of regulating relationships within the group and of managing confrontations with outsiders in various spheres of interaction. An Ibo in London is constrained in his behaviour with fellow Ibos and with non-Ibos by prescriptions emanating from the group, legitimated by tradition and upheld by its senior members. The imperative is equally strong for the successful and unsuccessful alike, regardless of their chances of returning to Nigeria. But in the nature of things a kinship ideology

operates to sustain the link with the homeland, where the body of close kin remain.

Despite its limited objective of examining the social organisation of an ethnic minority the thesis has relevance beyond the particular gorup chosen for study. It develops some hypotheses of ethnic groups and boundaries and as such is relevant to other studies of immigrant communities. It has a more general significance as an analysis of continuity and change in social organisation, built on certain premises about the nature of the social process.

The problem of the organisation of ethnic minorities has been discussed by several writers. The present attempt shows that in a community of individualists certain forces operate to sustain the group. In drawing out the structural implications of marriage in an immigrant community, the thesis provides one answer to the question of how an ethnic minority perpetuates itself. Following the approach adopted here the theme of kinship and marriage and the maintenance of group autonomy may be usefully developed in relation to other ascriptive groups.

In addition to the problem of social organisation in particular subgroups of society, the thesis seeks to amplify a theme on a different level of abstraction: that of the nature of the social process. It represents an attempt to study systematically the interdependence of power relations and symbolic action, on the assumption that these are the key variables in the social process, and that their interaction is the essence of continuity and change in social organisation.

This theoretical framework is sometimes implicitly adopted by other writers or applied retrospectively to particular social situations. Systematic applications have so far concentrated on religion and ritual as the symbolic structures used to articulate group interests. The present study, by focussing on a different form of symbolic action, may help to confirm the validity of the overall framework.

APPENDIX I

Population Statistics.

There is no complete and reliable register of Ibos in Britain. This is partly due to the fact that the boundaries of the ethnic group in Nigeria have never been coterminous with an administrative unit for which population statistics might be required.

There are no official statistics of Nigerians resident in the United Kingdom. According to a spokesman in the Education Section of the Nigerian High Commission in London, there are records only of those students who came via the regional students' advisory committees in Nigeria, and those individuals who had cause to register for some reason or other once they are here. (Such reasons are the renewal of passport, request for advice on travel or courses of study etc.) There are no records of non-students, or of students who have come without recourse to the advisory committees. In the existing official records individuals are classified on the basis of region rather than ethnic group so that the Ibos are, in any case, indistinguishable from the rest of the Nigerian population.

Other official bodies concerned with overseas students, such as the British Council and the Association of Commonwealth Universities, provide statistics of Nigerian students in Britain. But again there is no breakdown into ethnic group, and no record of the non-student population.

The three official records which provide a basis for estimating the Ibo population are neither complete nor wholly reliable. The first is the Directory of Eastern Nigerian Students in the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland and Continent of Europe, produced in 1965 by the Students' Unit of the Office of the Agent General

for Eastern Nigeria. The second is the Register compiled by the Biafra Office under the supervision of the Biafran Representative in London in 1969-70. The third is the Divisional Assembly Register, compiled in 1969-70 for the purpose of auditing the accounts of the Divisional Unions of Biafrans in London.

1. 1965 Directory of Eastern Nigerian Students. According to an individual who helped to compile the Directory in 1965 and kindly allowed me to see a copy in 1971, the collection of statistics of Eastern Nigerian students in Britain was a difficult business, but by and large successful. In the absence of an official Eastern Region student organisation, which would have made the task a lot easier, the organisers had to rely on two official sources and devise means of persuading people excluded from them to come and register. The two official sources were the Eastern Nigeria Students' Advisory Board and the list of individuals who had had occasion to contact the Eastern Nigeria office in London. The Advisory Board required a deposit of £450 from each student as a guarantee of adequate financial resources. Would-be students who lacked this amount came to Britain through other advisory committees where the deposit was not so large. Such people were excluded from the statistics of the Eastern Nigeria Students' Advisory Board and thereby limited the comprehensiveness of the Directory. In the preface the compilers note that 'hundreds of students do not pass through any of the student advisory committees and only a few of these have come forward to register. The Advisory Board list also excludes Federal Government Scholars and scholars of statutory corporations.

These two sources, therefore, were supplemented by two dances. At the first, held in Islington Town Hall in 1964, free drinks were offered to attract greater numbers. The second, held in the Seymour

Hall in the following year drew a crowd of over 1,000. Each person was given a census form to complete and asked to do the same for those of his friends and acquaintances who were not coming. The register was then compiled. It gives course statistics, distribution by administrative division, geographical distribution in Britain, and sponsoring bodies (source of finance) for both men and women students.

From the point of view of the research the usefulness of the Directory is limited by the exclusion of the Western Ibos who, living on the west bank of the Niger, were resident in the Mid- West Region. The method of compilation introduces a bias in favour of the younger student population and against non-students, against students who did not pass through the Eastern Region Students' Advirsory Board, either because they were sponsored by public bodies or were resident outside the Eastern Region or could not afford the deposit; and against individuals who were not in the habit of attending dances and were not well-known. The general reliability of some entries is suspect in areas such as finance. At least one individual covered by the research returned a false answer. The statistics of courses, geographical distribution in Britain, and source of finance, are given for Eastern Nigerian students as a whole, regardless of ethnic group. Similarly there are no cross-tabulations of location in Britain and the other variables, by which the characteristics of the London population could be derived. Perhaps the most obvious drawback from the point of view of the research is that the Directory is six years out of date.

However, in view of the general shortage of reliable data for the period covered by the research the Directory provides a useful historical record and an invaluable means of checking data derived from other sources.

2. Biafra Office Register 1969-70. The Biafra Office Register resembles the Eastern Region Agent General's Directory in that it covers the same geographical area. However, it includes those Western Ibos who chose to identify with the new regime. According to the Biafran Representative in London, whose office conducted the Census, information was obtained on sex, age, occupation and course of study for some 3,500 adults in the U.K., of whom approximately 3,000 lived in London. These figures are apparently an estimate, for Biafra collapsed on January 19th 1970 before the Census was completed. People were still registering at the last moment and the figures have never been tabulated. The completed forms were not available for inspection in 1971. However, Biafrans who were involved in conducting the census suggest that the estimate of total numbers made by the Biafran Representative islikely to be as accurate as it could be. They were not themselves prepared to offer alternative figures.

Other people regard the figure of 3,000 Biaffans in London as an underestimate. The census did not command universal support, and many people did not register for financial, political and other reasons. Registration involved the payment of a fee, for which an individual received a Biafran passport. For a man with a family, indeed for most people, this was a costly business. So some failed to register. Some men registered themselves but not their wives. In any case, registration was still going on when Biafra collapsed,

The figure of 3.000 given by the Representative includes the members of minority ethnic groups from the former Eastern Region who identified themselves as Biafrans. The Divisional Assembly Register indicates a lack of moral and financial support for Biafra among the population now included in the Rivers and South Eastern

States despite the fact that they participated in the Biafra Union and other organisations. This fact, together with the existence in London of a Rivers State and a South Eastern State organisation which competed fairly successfully with Biafran ones for the support of the people from the disputed minority areas suggests that the non-Ibo proportion in the figure given is small. In the circumstances it would seem that the number of non-Ibos can be discounted by the Ibos who are not included in the census. The figure of 3,000, therefore, may safely be accepted as a reasonable estimate of the number of Ibos in London.

3. Divisional Assembly Register. The Divisional Assembly was one of the major political institutions of the Biafrans in London. In 1968 the various divisional unions (based on divisions in Eastern Nigeria and made up of component town unions) were coordinated for the purpose of fundraising under the supervision of one of the committees of the Biafra Union. It later became established as an independent body with its own elected executive committee. Each of the 61 divisions (58 from the former Eastern Region and 3 from the Ibo areas of the Mid-West) sent two representatives to a Divisional Assembly. One of them was responsible for levying the amount required from the members of his union and submitting the account monthly to the Divisional Assembly.

Just after the collapse of Biafra an audit was started, partly in order to clear up some of the controversy surrounding the management of financial resources. Divisional Representatives were asked to submit their registers, in which contributions had been entered as they were paid by the members. Of the 34 Ibo divisions, 20 did so. The rest either refused to submit their registers for inspection or were unable to do so for a variety of reasons which need not be discussed here. The 20 submitted to auditing were made available

for the purpose of the research by an accountant involved in the audit.

The Divisional Union registers, held individually by the various divisional representatives, are the most accurate record of Ibos in London. All individuals were recorded if their existence was known, whether or not they contributed any money. Even if an individual was not involved in local affairs his existence in London was likely to have been known by his townspeople and hence recorded in the register. Unfortunately, however, the figures given are by no means conclusive, even for those divisions where records were up to date and submitted for auditing. The methods used for levying money at the local level were left to the discretion of the unions. There are inconsistencies in the records. For instance, in Abaise Division many women did not register. In Onitsha Urban Division married couples were counted as single units. In some cases the figures were given for each component clan.

The 20 divisional registers to which access was allowed give a useful estimate of the Ibo population from certain areas. The records, imcomplete as they are, provide a guide to the accuracy of statistics gathered from other sources.

Taken together, these statistics provide a general picture of the overall situation. Although problems of comparability arise on account of the different historical periods involved and the various units of classification used, no glaring discrepancies are revealed. At least, it appears that the various biases cancel each other out. If any group is consistently underrepresented it is the women.

Women are systematically included in only one of the registers - that of the Directory compiled by the Agent General in 1965. But,

as previously indicated, this list does not account for non-students. Although most women claim to acquire a qualification of some kind or another the event of the war has created a class of non-student, working wives. The only central organisation likely to be in a position to provide statistics of the total female population - the Biafra Union Women's Wing - did not in fact attract wide support among the women. The only satisfactory source is the estimates of local population given in some cases in the divisional union registers and in others in the course of interviews.

Individual estimates. An independent check on the accuracy of official statistics is provided by individual estimates. Individuals who by virtue of their strategic positions in local and national affairs have some knowledge of the population provide estimates which supplement the Divisional Assembly register (some of the informants were in fact divisional representatives and clan union officials whose registers were missing at the final audit). In the course of fieldwork it was not possible to obtain detailed membership records of more than a few local unions. A full enumeration by this means would have been an ideal solution to the problem. However, firgures obtained for almost 40 family, clan and divisional unions complement the official statistics and do not indicate any glaring discrepancies.

The attitude among individual informants towards disclosing factual information of this kind deserves attention. Most were willing to hazard a guess as th their number in Britain, and some to be fairly precise as to age, sex, marital status and year of arrival. But requests to see clan union registers met with a firm and instant refusal. On the rare occasions when this was permitted the book was opened and closed before sufficient time had elapsed for more than a glance, and invariably it remained in the hands of

the informant (generally the secretary or treasurer of the union). The problem seems to have been the possible disclosure of names.

However, classificatory information of all kinds was regarded as highly confidential. In all but a very few cases the thought of providing a list ofdempgraphic characteristics of townspeople bearing no names was regarded as being completely out of the question. In the few cases where such a list was forthcoming it was generally seen as involving a considerable risk on one side and an enormous privilege on the other. The reluctance to discuss personal information with outsiders may simply be a reflection of the post-war bitterness and suspicion. But it extends into areas which cannot be so easily explained. It exists, for instance, even among the Ibos themselves.

The scarcity of reliable official statistics, too, requires an explanation. The widespread suspicion that such information might be wanted for the wrong purpose or fall into the wrong hands, and the secrecy surrounding the very whereabouts of the Biafra Census, may well be an expression of post-war fears of political recrimination and the desire to conceal the records of a war which ended in defeat. At the same time the secrecy and concern surrounding population figures indicate a deeper significance attached to numerical strength and weakness. It is illuminating to compare the contemporary phenomenon with earlier manifestations.

In 1929 attention was drawn to the dislike of being counted by the disturbances in South East Nigeria, sparked off by a census of women. In a sense, the women's action was directed simply against the imposition of taxes which they felt sure would follow the census and which they could ill afford. At the same time, however, their actions and words conveyed a sense of outrage over the act of counting, itself. According to Afigbo [1] counting was believed to cause death,

1. A.A.Afigbo (1966)

"because it reminded evil spirits that a particular kin group had multiplied beyond a certain point and that the time had come to prune it".

The importance of numerical strength in a traditional Ibo community has been analysed by G.I.Jones in structural terms.[1] The main principle of social structure is dual organisation, the division of the community into two parts which are balanced in weight and size. If, through reasons of imbalance, one part is unable to maintain its position in relation to the other in carrying out certain duties, it is relegated to a 'lower' position and receives a proportionately smaller share of goods, rights and other benefits. The pattern of segmentary opposition may provide an answer to inter-clan rivalry in contemporary Ibo society, and to the reluctance of individuals to disclose information to anyone who does not share the same structural interests as themselves.

The political significance of numerical strength has been seen much more recently. The controversy surrounding the 1962 Census in Nigeria, which resulted in a recount in the following year, arose over the actual or suspected distortion of figures by groups which sought to gain from it. On that occasion the event in question had national significance. But in local politics, too, the issue of numbers looms large in the competition for local amenities.

An explanation in symbolic or structural terms for the scarcity of complete and reliable statistics of Ibos in London is perhaps far-fetched. Nevertheless, the preceding discussion casts new light on the problem and suggests hidden dimensions.

Census 1971. Classificatory data were obtained for 816 individuals over 15 years of age by a census conducted in the field. Items included age, sex, marital status and number of children, religious

1. G.I.Jones (1949)

affiliation, place of origin, year of arrival in Britain, reason for coming, and present occupation and/or course of study.

Inclusion in the census was not systematic, for in the absence of a register of Ibos in London or complete lists of local communities it was difficult to employ principles of random sampling. Information was collected for as many individuals as possible, either encountered directly or mentioned in the course of conversation. Some three hundred individuals were included through the good offices of the Commonwealth Students' Children's Society and the National Council for Civil Liberties, who gave access to their personal files. Occasionally informants could be persuaded to complete a consus form for themselves and their freinds but this was rare. Generally details were transferred retrospectively onto census forms. These were finally coded and tabulated by computer.

The limitations of such an approach are readily acknowledged. The most serious drawback of the Census is its lack of representativeness. Nonetheless, it is hoped that the bias in favour of the more successful members of the community, mentioned in the General Introduction, is counteracted by the inclusion of data obtained on problem families from welfare agencies, of cases reported by informants as typifying the less successful, and of details of all individuals whose names cropped up in the course of conversation.

Marriage Sample. The marriage statistics presented in chapters 2, 3, 5 and 6 are derived from a sample of married couples. The sample was compiled by methods similar to those of the Census and is hence subject to the same limitations. The 338 married couples included were encountered directly or described by informants. A bias in favour of stable marriages (couples who were willing to be interviewed) is counterd by cases of marital breakdown reported in the course of

interviews. The files of the Commonwealth Students' Children' Society provided valuable case material which further redressed the balance.

APPENDIX II

Circulars from the Secretary of the Divisional Assembly to Divisional Union Representatives.

BIAFRA UNION DIVISIONAL ASSEMBLY

SECRETARIAT

Hendon, N.W.4.

15th November, 1969.

TO ALL DIVISIONAL UNION SECRETARIES

Dear Secretary,

I am directed by a Joint Session of the Divisional Assembly, Biafra Union Executive, the Special Representative, Dr. I. Nzimiro, a Special Envoy from Biafra, to request you to forward to the above address, as soon as possible, but not later than Saturday, 22nd November, 1969, the following information:-

(1) A complete list of all persons from your Division, with addresses if available.

(2) A complete list of names and addresses of all registered members of your Union.

(3) A list of names and addresses of Officers of your Union.

(4) To confirm the names of your Divisional Representatives.

(5) The expected date of your next election of Officers.

May I point out that the above information has nothing to do with the Registration of all Biafrans that is now in progress.

Please inform your members as follows:-

(1) To register quickly with the Biafra Office.

(2) To pay up their levy of £20, £15, £10 for males, spinsters and married women respectively.

(3) To endeavour to pay without delay any outstanding arrears.

I trust that your urgent attention will be given to these requests.

Yours in the Service of our Country,

Secretary.

Telephone [redacted] Secretariat.

[redacted],

Enfield, Middlesex.

7th July, 1969.

Dear Sirs,

In view of the urgency attached to the reading of the draft Constitution, the Divisional Assembly has decided to hold extra-ordinary emergency meetings on the following dates, this week : at Co-operative Hall, 126, Seven Sisters Rd., N.4.

(1) Wednesday 9th July 1969 starting by 7.00 p.m.

(2) Friday, 11th July 1969 starting by 7.00 p.m.

(3) Saturday, 12th July 1969 starting by 10.00 a.m.

Divisional Representatives are strongly requested to be regular and punctual at the above meetings.

Furthermore, the Assembly has decided to ask all Representatives to submit without delay names of the Executive Members of their Division to the above address, and each list must be accompanied by at least the address of the President and Secretary of each Division.

I must not overstress the importance of this request, as I hope that the Representatives did realise the problems the Assembly is trying to overcome by this process.

Yours faithfully,

[redacted]

Secretary Divisional Assembly.

P.S.

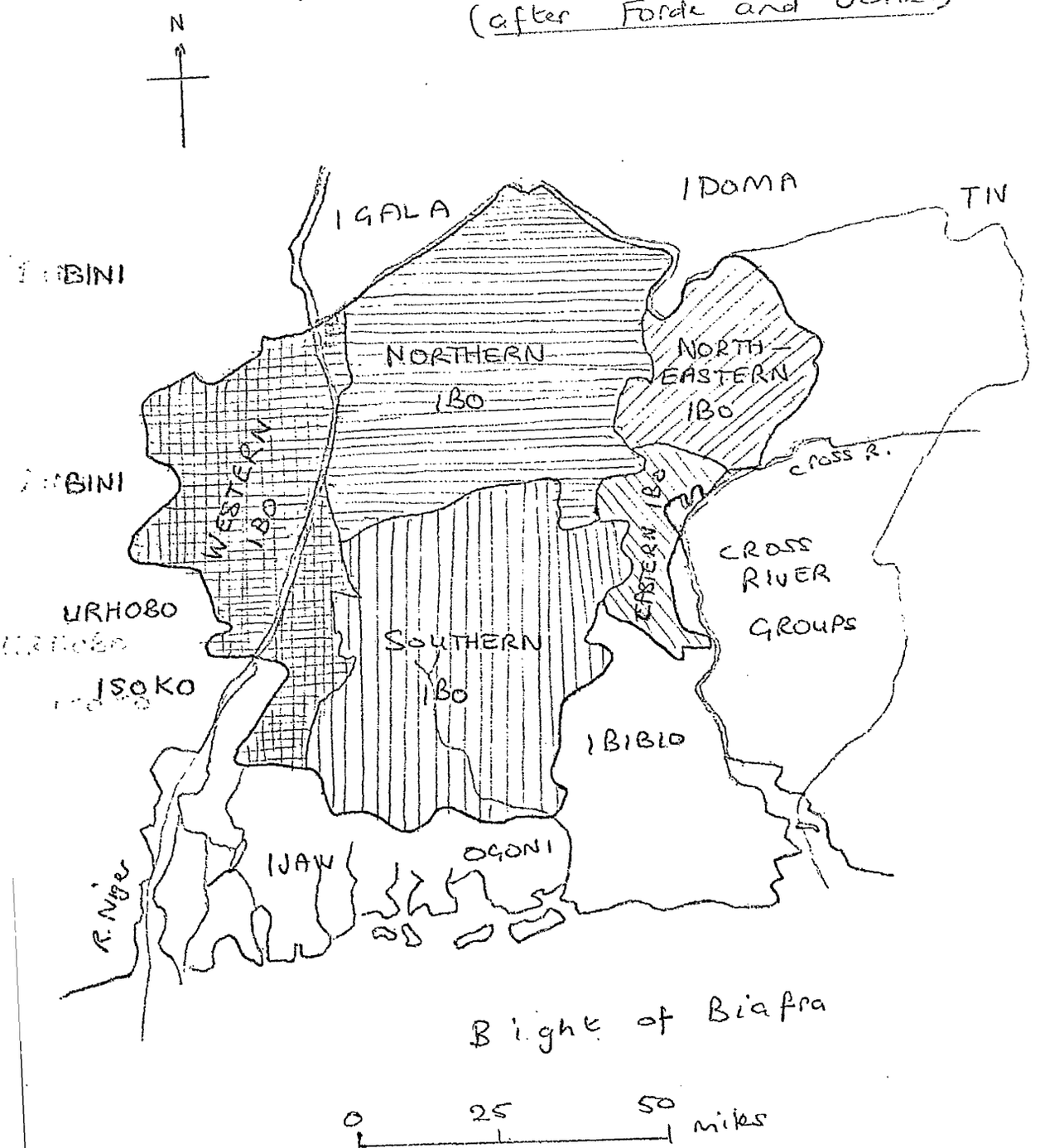
It has come to the knowledge of the Assembly that many representatives do not communicate the contents of the various Minutes in their possession to their Division. This, in the opinion of the Assembly is a very serious complaint and each Divisional Representative should henceforth ensure that the contents of the minutes and other important decisions of the Assembly are duly explained to members of their Divisional Union.

APPENDIX III

MAPS:

1. Main socio-linguistic units in Ibboland.
2. Eastern Provinces, 1946.
3. South Eastern Nigeria, 1970.

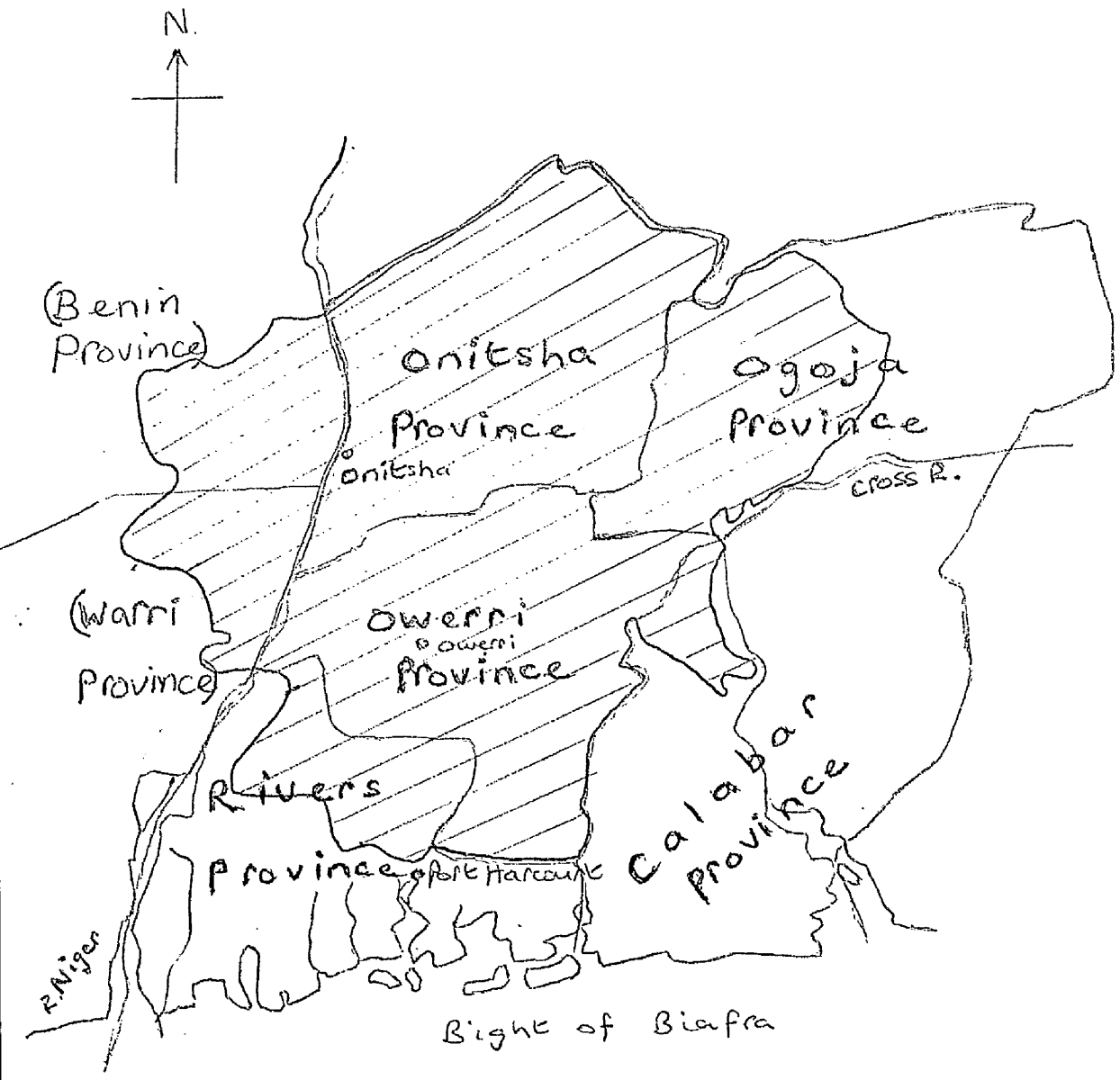
1. Main Socio-linguistic Units
(after Forde and Jones)



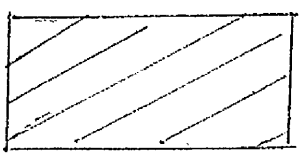
——— Former Eastern Region / Biafra boundary

——— Iboland.

2. Eastern Provinces 1946

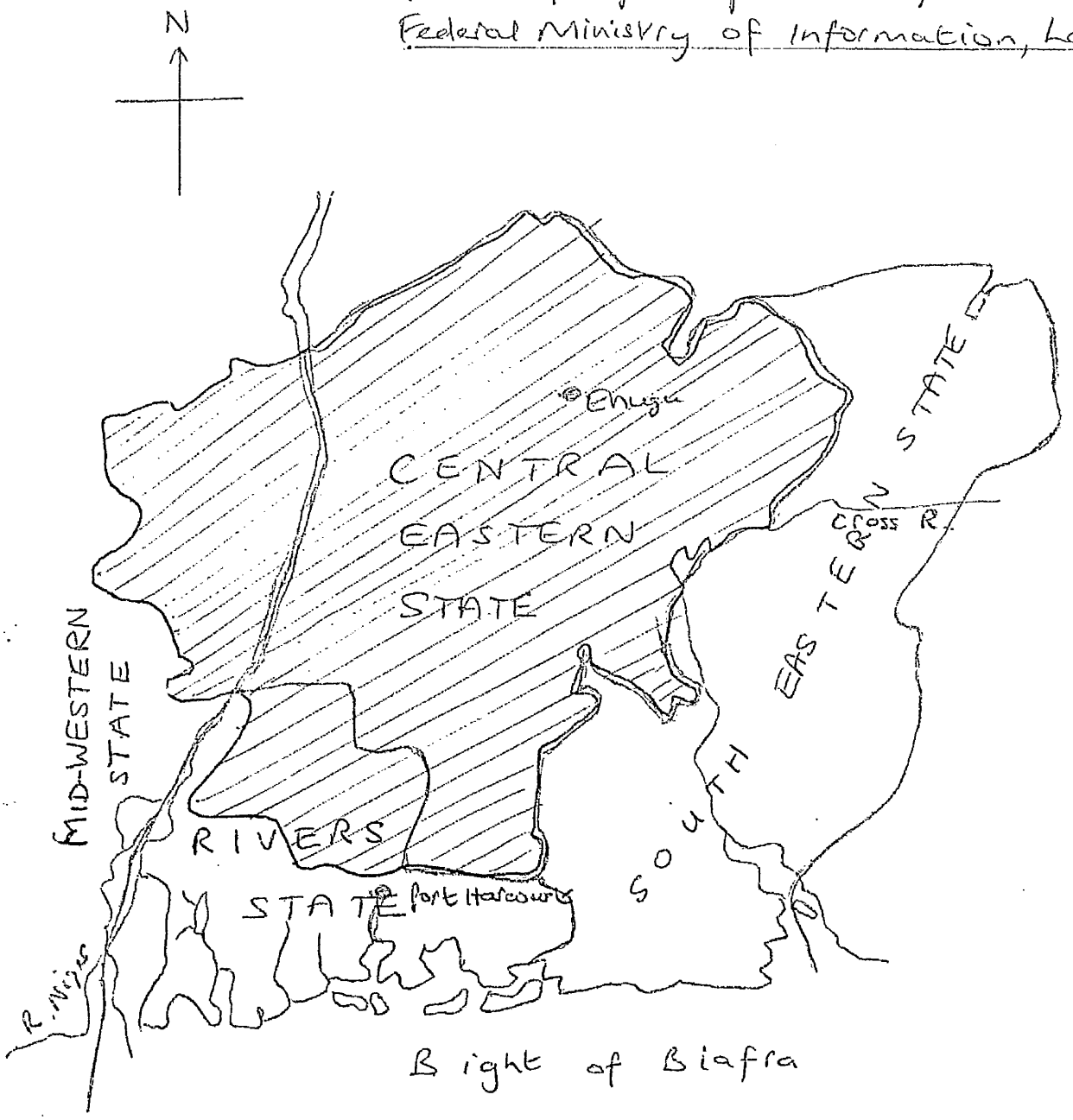


_____ Provincial Boundaries



Iboland.

3. State Boundaries 1970
(from a pamphlet produced by the Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos)



State Boundaries

Iboland

APPENDIX IV

Biafra Union Executive Committee.

	Eastern Nigeria Union 1966	Biafra Union 1967	Biafra Union 1969
President	minority	minority	minority
Vice President I	Onitsha Ibo	Onitsha Ibo	Owerri Ibo
Vice President 2	Onitsha Ibo	-	-
Secretary	Owerri Ibo	Owerri Ibo	Owerri Ibo
Assistant Sec.	Onitsha Ibo	1. minority 2. minority	Owerri Ibo
Treasurer	minority	minority	Owerri Ibo
Financial Sec.	minority	1.minority 2. Onitsha Ibo	?
Publicity Sec.	?	1. Onitsha Ibo 2. Onitsha Ibo	Owerri Ibo
Social Sec.	Minority	?	Owerri Ibo
Unofficial members	?	?	?
	3 Onitshas	4 Onitshas	6 Owerris
	1 Owerri	1 Owerri	0 Onitshas

Note The explanation offered by the informant for the duplication of officers in the 1967 Biafra Union executive is that the President removed the substantive officers and replaced them with individuals of his own choice.

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